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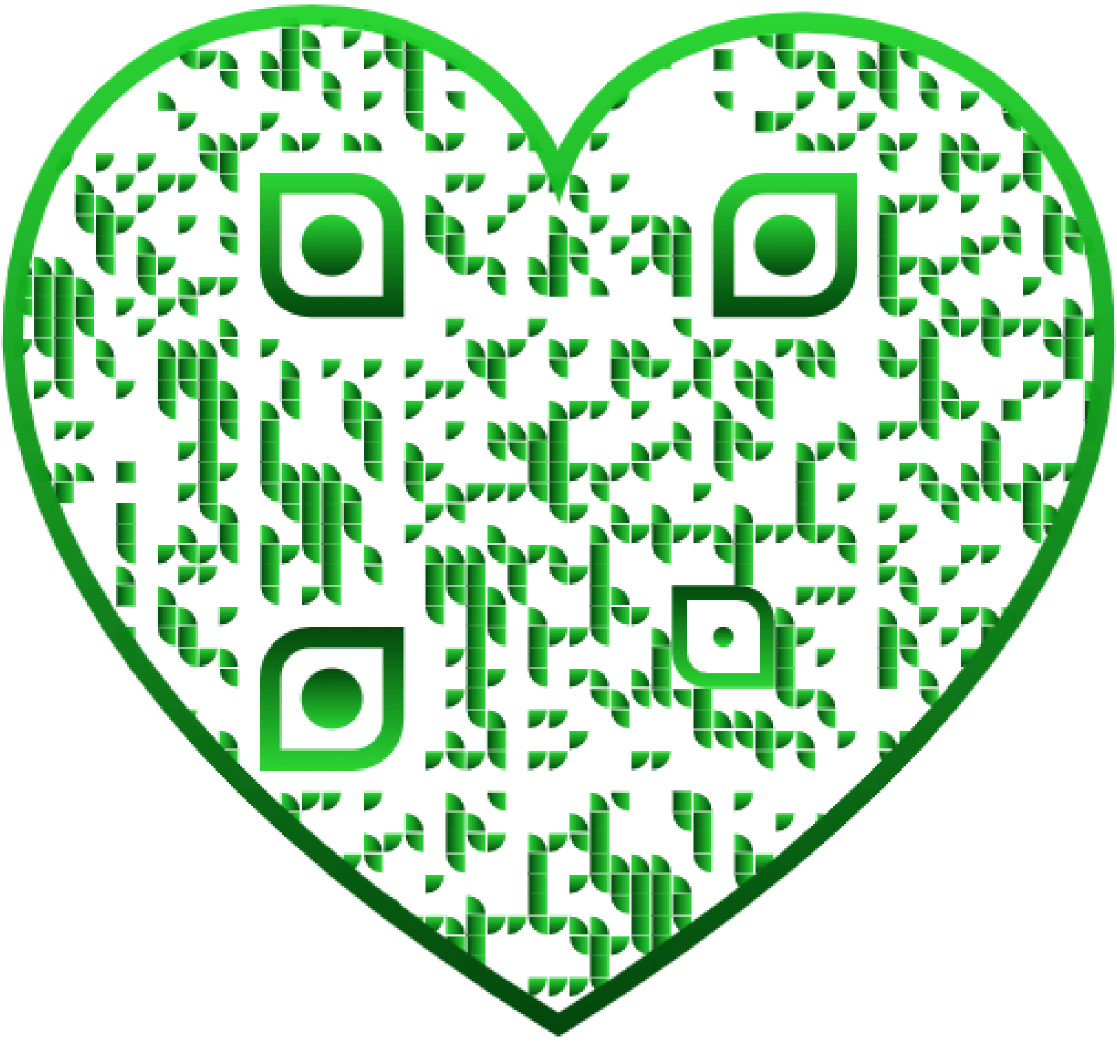

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Yanks Air Museum rescues at PBY-6A Catalina that was facing a very uncertain future / by Michael O'Leary

COVER: Magnificent photograph of a PBJ-1H Mitchell being prepared for delivery to the US Marine Corps where it would go on to serve with VMB-613. Heavy armament included a 75mm T13E1 cannon and 14 Browning M2 .50-caliber machine guns There were four in the nose section, four package guns (two on a side) holding four guns, two in a power operated Bendix Model R turret, two in the Bell Type M-7 tail turret, and one in each slightly staggered waist position. For students of military aircraft paint schemes, this view is of interest since the open nose section shows areas of over spray, portions painted in sprayed aluminum, areas of natural aluminum, and some portions in zinc chromate. (North American Aviation)

THESE PAGES: This aircraft is either a later production Republic P-47C Thunderbolt or an early production P-47D. The fighter was probably assigned to a training school but someone has taken the time to apply an attractive red pattern to the nose, which is a relief from the standard Olive Drab and Neutral Gray camouflage. Note that the armament has been reduced to just two .50-caliber weapons in each wing panel. (USAAF)

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MESSAGE FROM THE PUBLISHER

Yanks Air Museum has rescued a Super Catalina from an uncertain fate. Traveling to Ephrata, Washington, the Yanks crew disassembled and transported the amphibian in what I think is a record time. Details of the mission are elsewhere in this issue but I find it interesting that many local residents — not aviation types — had taken a proprietary interest in the aircraft and visited the crew while the plane was being disassembled. Some were distinctly unhappy that the Super Cat was leaving and voiced their thoughts but for the most part the residents knew that it was going to a better location since the airframe had started to deteriorate noticeably over the past few years. The craft is now safely back at Yanks and in the museum's storage facility where it joins an ex-USAAF combat veteran OA-10 Catalina. Museum founder Charles Nichols is considering several plans for both machines and we will be reporting on his decisions in a future issue.

The saving of the Super Cat started an in-office discussion on the future of large historic aircraft – an ongoing discussion as readers of this column know. Most of the thoughts and comments were on the negative side. With the major museums of the Air Force and Navy now actively scrapping once historic aircraft, we have tried to determine the overall goals of these museums. It is almost impossible to formulate a mission statement since with the military, situations constantly change with rotation/retirement of commanding officers along with what political influences are in power. As this is being written, examples of the combat-proven Fairchild-Republic A-10 Thunderbolt II are being flown to Davis-Monthan AFB on a weekly basis where they will be stored and then scrapped. The USAF never liked the A-10 because it was, let's face it, somewhat primitive in looks and certainly not "bright and shiny." Over the years, the A-10 has proven its worth time and again in combat and that is more than can be said for some of the other aircraft in the inventory. The current USAF thinking is to replace the A-10 with the ultra-expensive F-35, which will then use ultra-expensive munitions to destroy ground targets. The A-10 could do this very cheaply with its fearsome built-in cannon and a variety of underwing stores. The withdrawal of these aircraft, along with other types, is also combined with the scrapping of numerous Navy warships. All this contributes to a weakening of American military power at a time when our stockpiles of weapons are flowing out of our strategic warehouses at a prodigious rate to satisfy the demands of the Ukraine (which, before the Russian invasion, was one of the most corrupt nations in the European realm) and Israel. Even with increased production, our national stockpiles have dwindled. Same with our strategic petroleum reserves. In order to gain more votes, politicians have opened up these reserves so that auto fuel will drop by a few pennies and thus guarantee the current administration (this is being written on 31 October and we have no idea what the election will bring) garners a few more votes in favor of decreased national security.

Getting back to the preservation of large airframes, we note in this issue the problems with the Catalina at RAF Cosford. Once in perfect, flyable condition, the aircraft was pushed outside, stripped of its fabric covering, and left to the vagaries of British weather. Its future does not look good. RAF Cosford was also the depository of the historic collection of British Airways. Sometime back, the new administration of the airline pulled funding for the maintenance of the historic airframes and in short order claw machines were brought in and the aircraft ripped apart. This included a Boeing 707 — arguably a world-changing design – that still had its original passenger interior. For our next issue's reporting, we are trying to find if there are any 707s preserved with an original passenger interior. If you know of one, let us know. The Boeing 707 led to American dominance in jet airliner technology. One thinks that perhaps Boeing should have been called in to help financially but that company, with its constantly rotating collection of CEOs, is deep in its own worries and probably will not be financially viable for some years to come.

Some military bases are chopping up their so-called "gate guardians" because the planes have been allowed to lapse into poor condition and base commanders consider them eyesores. Because of this, we have lost several very important B-52 Stratofortress combat veterans as well as a score of lesser aircraft. Surely each USAF base could establish a core group of volunteers that would clean, paint, and maintain these relics? I guess not. Then, we have the overall plan of scrapping historic aircraft on outside display once they reach an "allocated lifespan." Exactly how the military is formulating this "lifespan" in unclear and it may be up to the whims of individual base commanders. There is some thought that these aircraft could be replaced with newer airframes but there lies a real problem. Many of the more current aircraft incorporate stealth technology that the military does not want on display. For example, the Lockheed F-117A that was delivered to the Palm Springs Air Museum was minus a number of key components that the military did not want exhibited. Palm Springs excellent staff and volunteer force managed to recreate these various bits so that the F-117A is on display in what appears to be a complete condition. As such, it is one of the museum's most popular exhibits. What will happen when it comes time to put current variants of the F-22, B-2, and F-35 on display for future generations? Will it even happen?

Over the past few years, we have reported on the ups and downs (mainly downs) of the Airline History Museum in Kansas City. The museum has magnificent examples of such iconic TWA aircraft as the Martin 4*0*4, Northrop Delta, Douglas DC-3 and, perhaps most importantly, a beautiful Lockheed Super Constellation. The Super Connie used to be regularly flown but has not turned a prop blade in many years. The management of the museum simply aged out and there was little interest shown in getting younger people involved. Then came a scandal concerning possible misappropriation of funds. More recently, the museum has been locked in a lawsuit with an FBO that wants the space the museum's historic hangar occupies (we all know the world needs more biz jets). As this issue goes to press, we are starting to receive information that the Super Constellation may have a new owner or guardian. That individual is John Travolta. It seems that the registration of the plane is now with Travolta's Constellation Productions, his film and creative development company. Travolta loves the Connie and has been a previous owner of an example. For the past several months, we have also been receiving reports out of Hollywood that a major new film is in the works revolving around a Constellation. While we have not been able to find anything definitive, this may well be why a certain flurry of Connie-related activity has taken place. If all this is true, then it is a good thing. The Constellation will be put into flying shape and maintained to correct standards by a person deeply committed to the type. In our very strange world, will this lead to things such as "Boeing B-52 Stratofortress sponsored by Tom Cruise?" Who knows? As long as someone that has the love and necessary funding to preserve and operate our historic aircraft does so, then that is a very, very good thing.

MICHAEL O'LEARY/PUBLISHER
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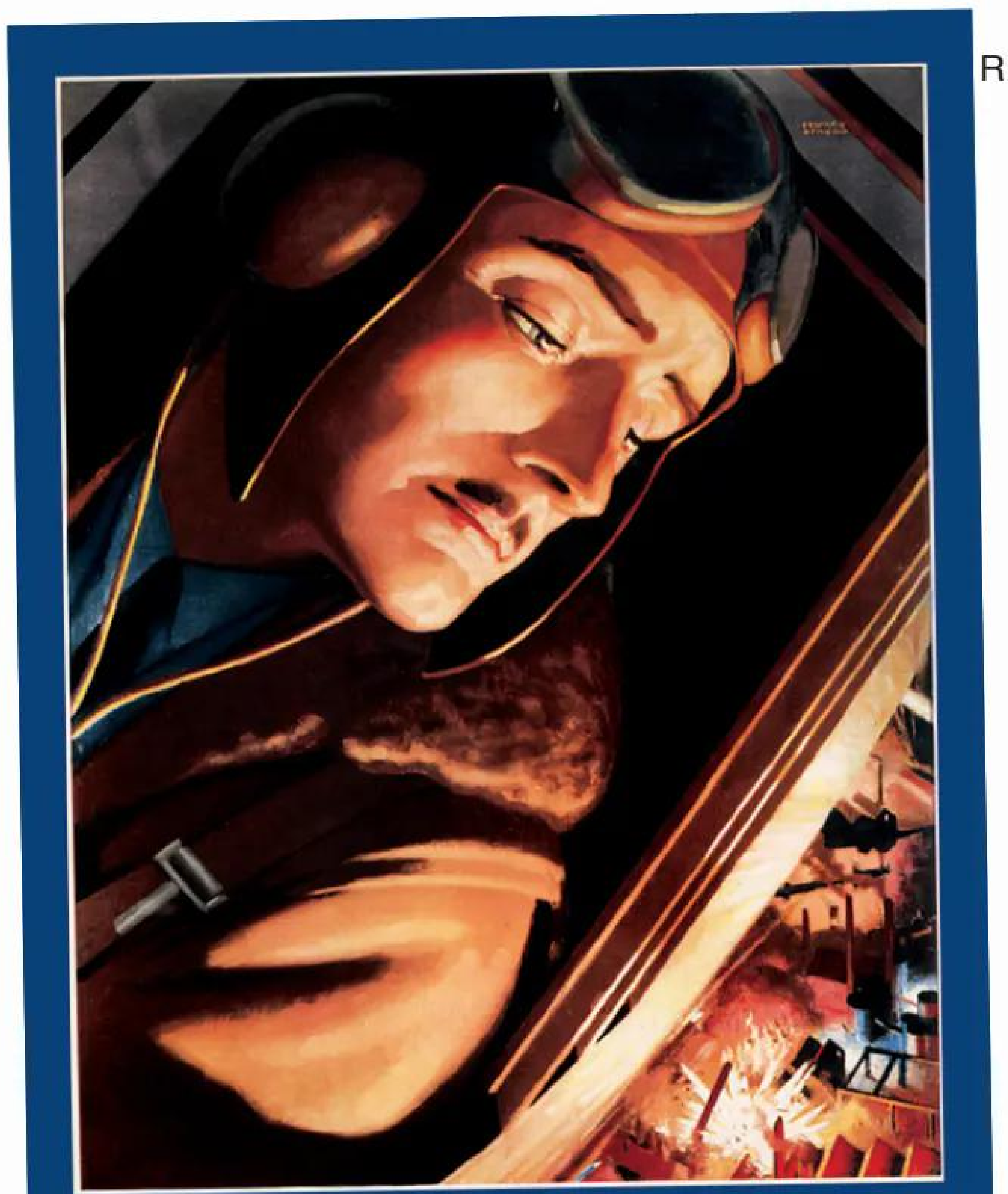


WARBIRD & CLASSIC REPORT

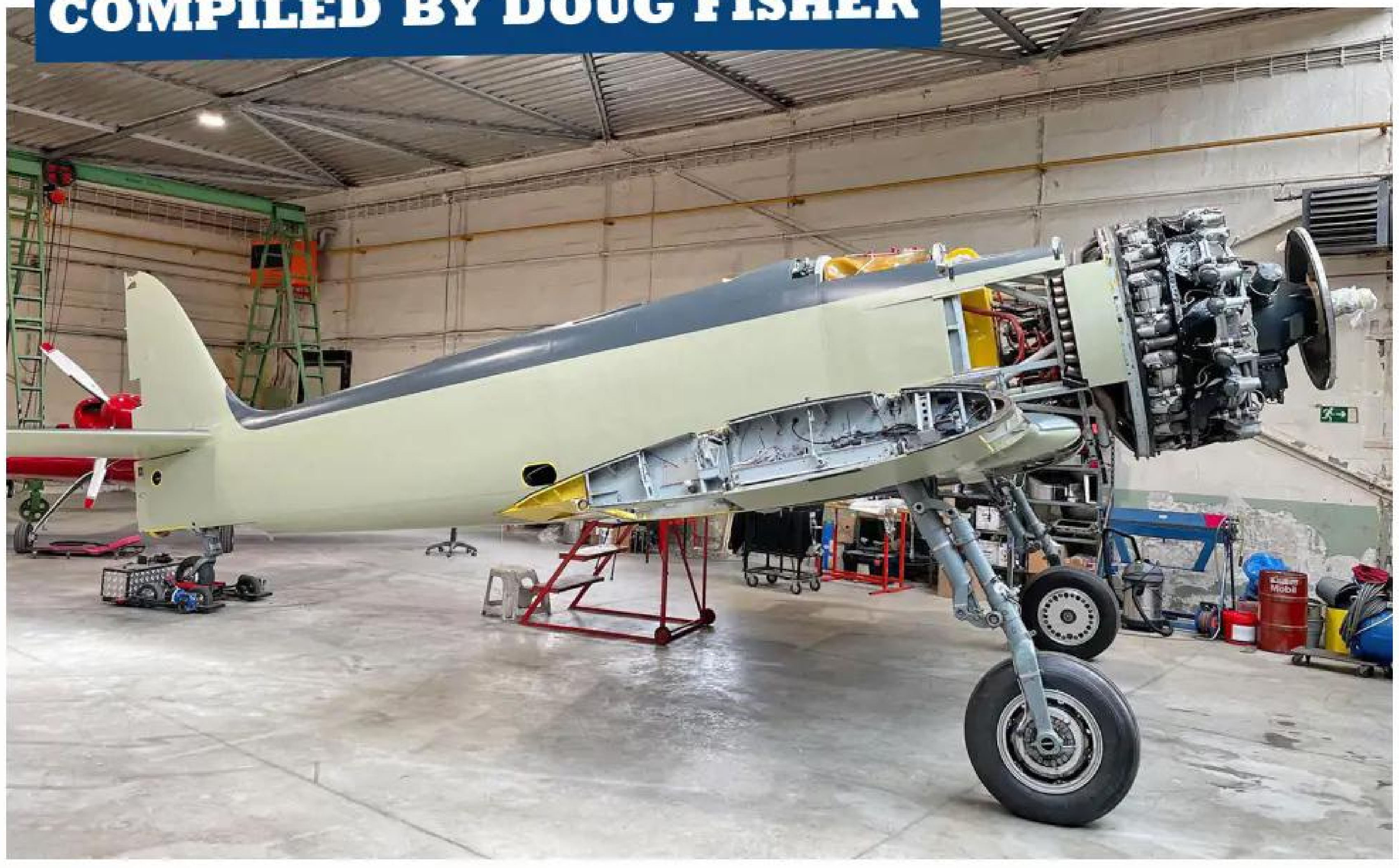
KEEP 'EM FLYING!

COMPILED BY DOUG FISHER

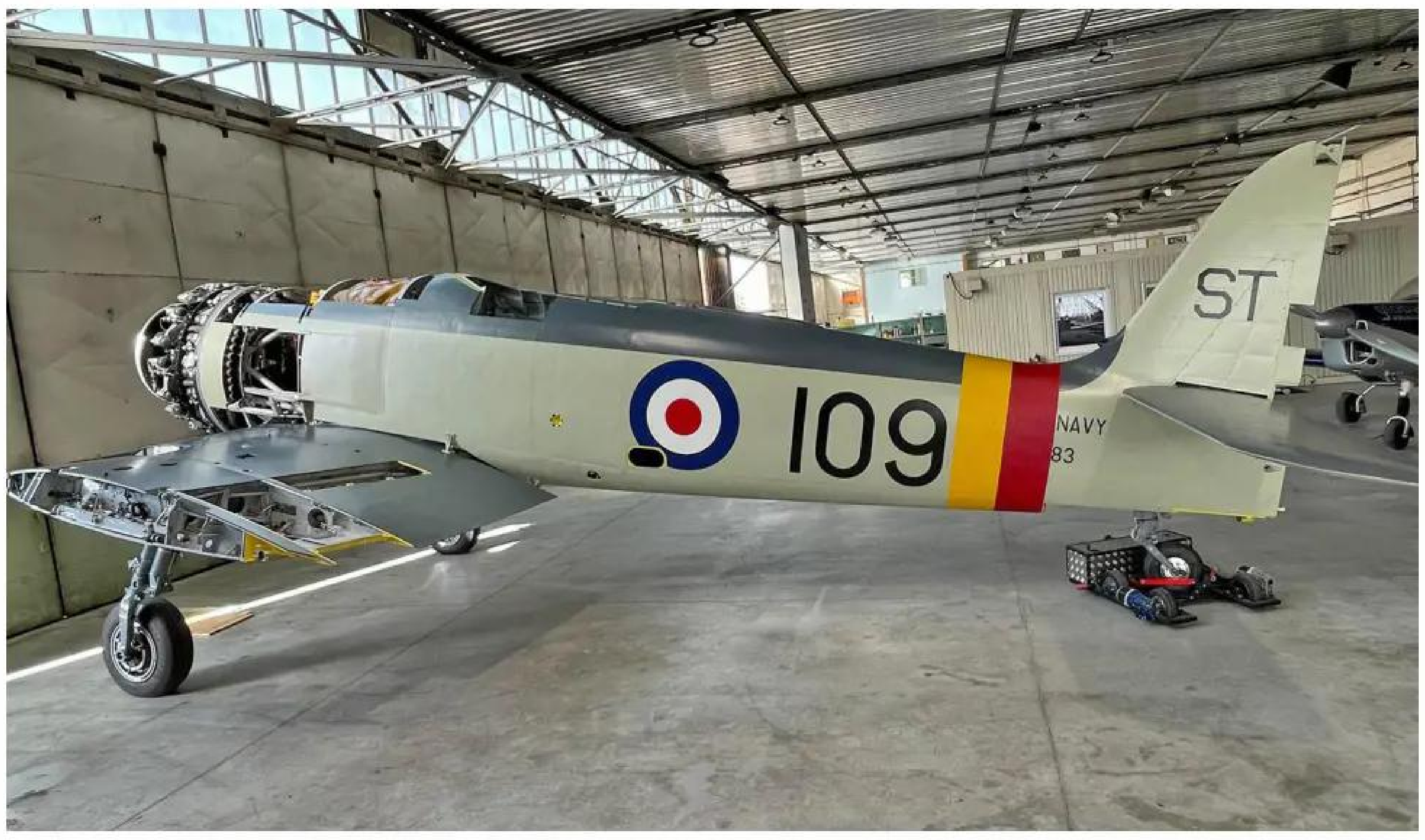
The Boeing Stearman Model 73 is hung in Wichita's Ruffin Building.

RARE STEARMAN ON DISPLAY

The Kansas City Aviation Museum has hung a rare Stearman NS-1 inside downtown Wichita's Ruffin Building (see "Vintage Wings Over Oregon" and "Prototypes" in this issue for more Stearman information). The 1934 aircraft is thought to be the only survivor of the 61 examples built and it would lead directly to the famed Boeing Stearman Model 75 Kaydet. The aircraft has numerous differences from the Model 75 and it is fitting that the plane is now on display in the city where it was built.



The former *Riff-Raff* receiving its new coat of paint.



The Sea Fury getting its new markings, including Operation *Mariner* bands.

Lieutenant (jg) Elster after landing aboard HMCS *Magnificent* with his AD-4 Skyraider. As can be seen, the plane received a Maple Leaf insignia along with the name *MAGGIE*.

USN Skyraider and RCN Sea Fury aboard *Magnificent*. Operation *Mariner* could have turned into one of the worst peace-time naval aviation disasters.

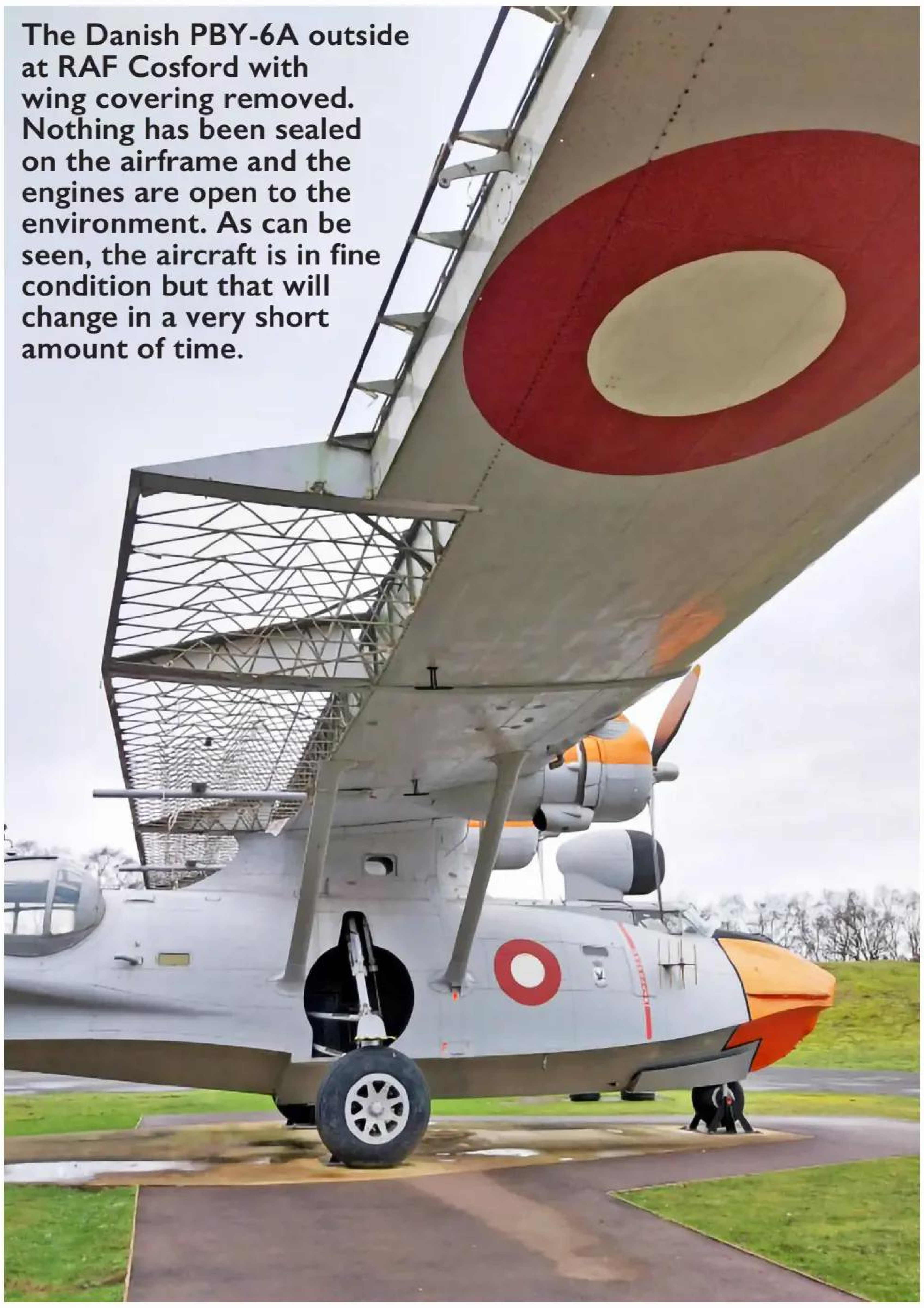
RIFF-RAFF GETS NEW PAINT

We have reported on the fact that the well-known Reno Unlimited Hawker Sea Fury named *Riff-Raff* (N62143) has found a new home in Czechoslovakia. The aircraft had been subject of a rebuild and has now started receiving its paint scheme. The plane is being painted as Sea Fury WE683 that flew with No. 1831 Royal Navy Volunteer Squadron out of RNAS Stretton during 1953. The bright rear fuselage bands were added to show that the plane was participating in Operation *Mariner*. In this event, numerous British and American ships operated in very bad weather with distinctly mixed results. Aircraft from the USS *Wasp* (CVA-18), USS *Bennington* (CV-20), and HMCS *Magnificent* were airborne on 23 September 1953 when the carriers became enveloped by fog. Some 42 planes were running low on fuel and two admirals issued an order that all aircraft were to ditch near the submarine USS *Redfin* (SSR-272) at 1620-hours. This meant that the 42 aircraft would be splashing down at the same time near the sub. Just as the first planes were setting up to ditch, the fog slightly lifted and the call went out for planes to land on the first carrier they could find. The lifting of the fog became known as the "Mariner Miracle" as aircraft touched down on the first carrier they saw with several running out of fuel as they taxied to the hangar elevator. Of course, USN planes that landed on the Canadian carrier were quickly given "special" markings as were those Canadian planes that touched down on the American flat-tops. What could have been a major disaster was narrowly avoided.

NOT THE WAY TO DO IT

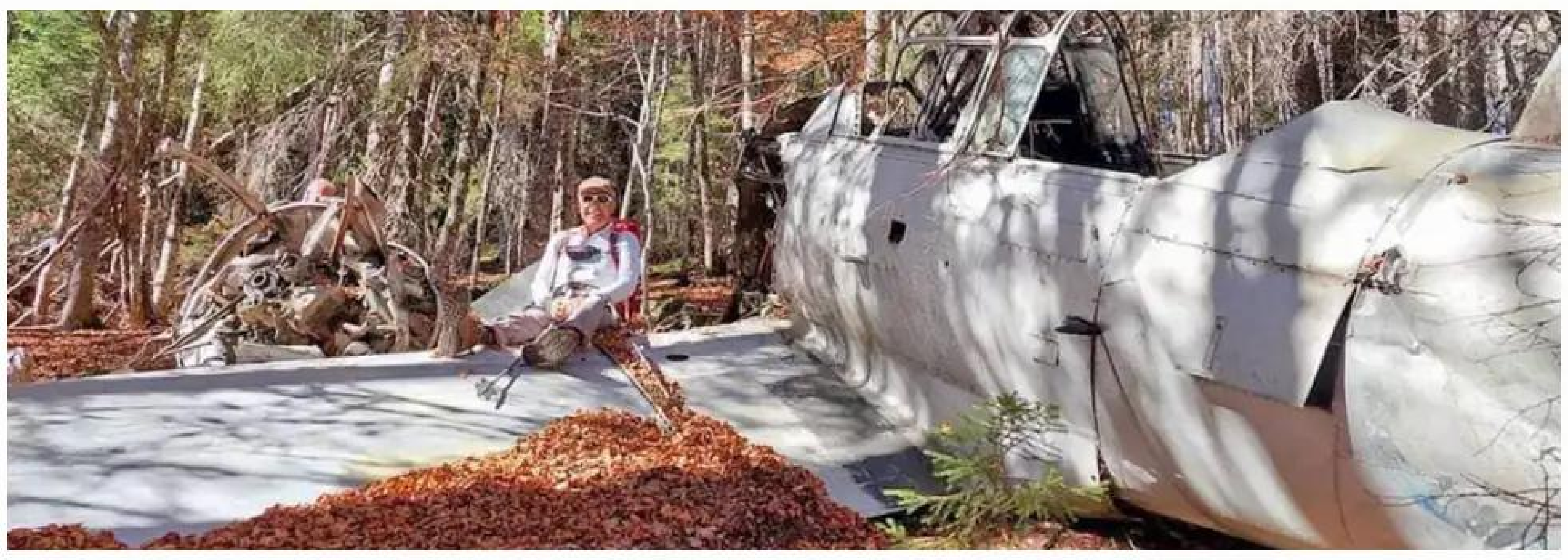
Many years ago, the RAF Museum was gifted with a flyable Royal Danish Air Force PBY-6A Catalina. This aircraft has been displayed at RAF Cosford but has recently been deemed "surplus to needs." Just why is unclear since the British operated many Cats during the war but did not bother to save one for preservation. The Danish gift was most generous but, as with numerous other rare aircraft at RAF Cosford, the PBY-6A is being very poorly treated. The amphibian has been moved out of its protective hangar and placed outside in the terrible British weather. Even worse, and as can be seen in the photo, the covering on the wing has been removed and this allows the weather to get directly into the structure. One docent at the museum stated, "We were told that if the plane was going to be put outside, then removal of the covering would be best for long-time preservation." What? We have no idea who came up with this idiocy but the Cat is available and hopefully will be taken away before it turns into a hulk that is past restoration.

This PBY-6A was built as BuNo 63993 and was accepted by the US Navy on 1 July 1945. It then transferred to Fleet Air Wing 14 at NAS San Diego for assignment. On 27 July 1945, it was flown to FAW-2 at NAS Pearl Harbor and by 25 April 1947 it was at NAS Mustin in Philapdelphia. After a decade of service, the Cat went to Pan American in New Orleans where it was overhauled for the Royal Danish Air Force. At this time, it had flown 1636 hours. On 18 December 1957, it went into service with the *Marinens Flyvevsaesen* with the serial 82-866 at based at Vaerlose. On 1 May 1961, it received the new serial L-866MF. On 15 November 1970, it was the last Catalina to be retired from Danish service and on 30 May 1974 it undertook a 8.2-hr flight from Vaerloese to RAF Colerne where it went on display in that base's museum. The aircraft was delivered with all the military equipment intact and was certainly the finest Catalina in Britain. It was moved by road to Cosford on 30 October 1975 where it has been on display ever since. Not only is the treatment of the aircraft a slap in the face to the Danes but it also ignores the thousands of British and Commonwealth servicemen that flew and maintained Catalinas during the war.


The Danish PBY-6A outside at RAF Cosford with wing covering removed. Nothing has been sealed on the airframe and the engines are open to the environment. As can be seen, the aircraft is in fine condition but that will change in a very short amount of time.

The Danes flew -5A and -6A Cats and put the planes to a variety of uses. This PBY-5A was photographed heading out for takeoff.

For years, RAF Cosford kept the Cat inside, intact, and in relatively good condition. Now it is been moved outside, wing covering removed and left to the elements. At press time, we had not received any answers to the emails set to RAF Cosford.


Unidentified Texan in a Greek forest.

YOU NEVER KNOW WHAT IS OUT THERE

This abandoned Texan sits in a forest somewhere in Greece. The Greek Air Force used a wide variety of aircraft following the Second World War and enthusiast groups are now scouring the country searching for rare examples. While the Texan certainly can't be classified as rare, it is a most interesting find and probably has lots of tales to tell.

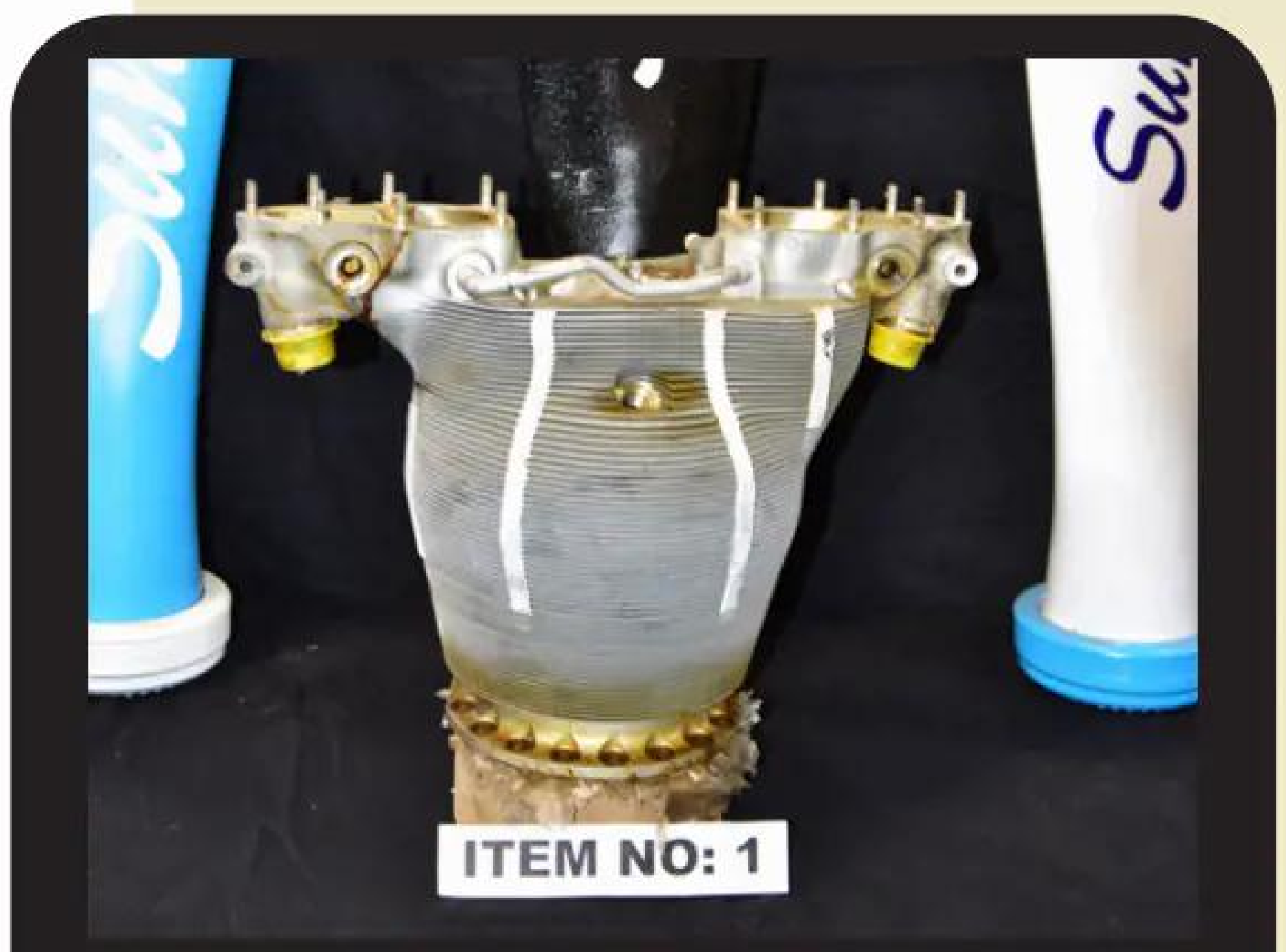
Steve Kretsinger was killed in the crash of his award-winning J-2. (Roger Cain)

STEVE KRETSINGER

In "Vintage Wings Over Oregon" in this issue, we have photos of Steve Kretsinger and his J-26 at the WAAAM fly-in. On 3 October, we received news that Steve had been killed in the crash of the J-2 while attempting to land on the turf runway at George Felt Airport near Roseburg, Oregon. Witnesses stated that the plane was doing a go-around after the first landing attempt. On the second attempt, it bounced on the runway and launched back into the air, hitting the top of a tree and then nose-dived to the ground.

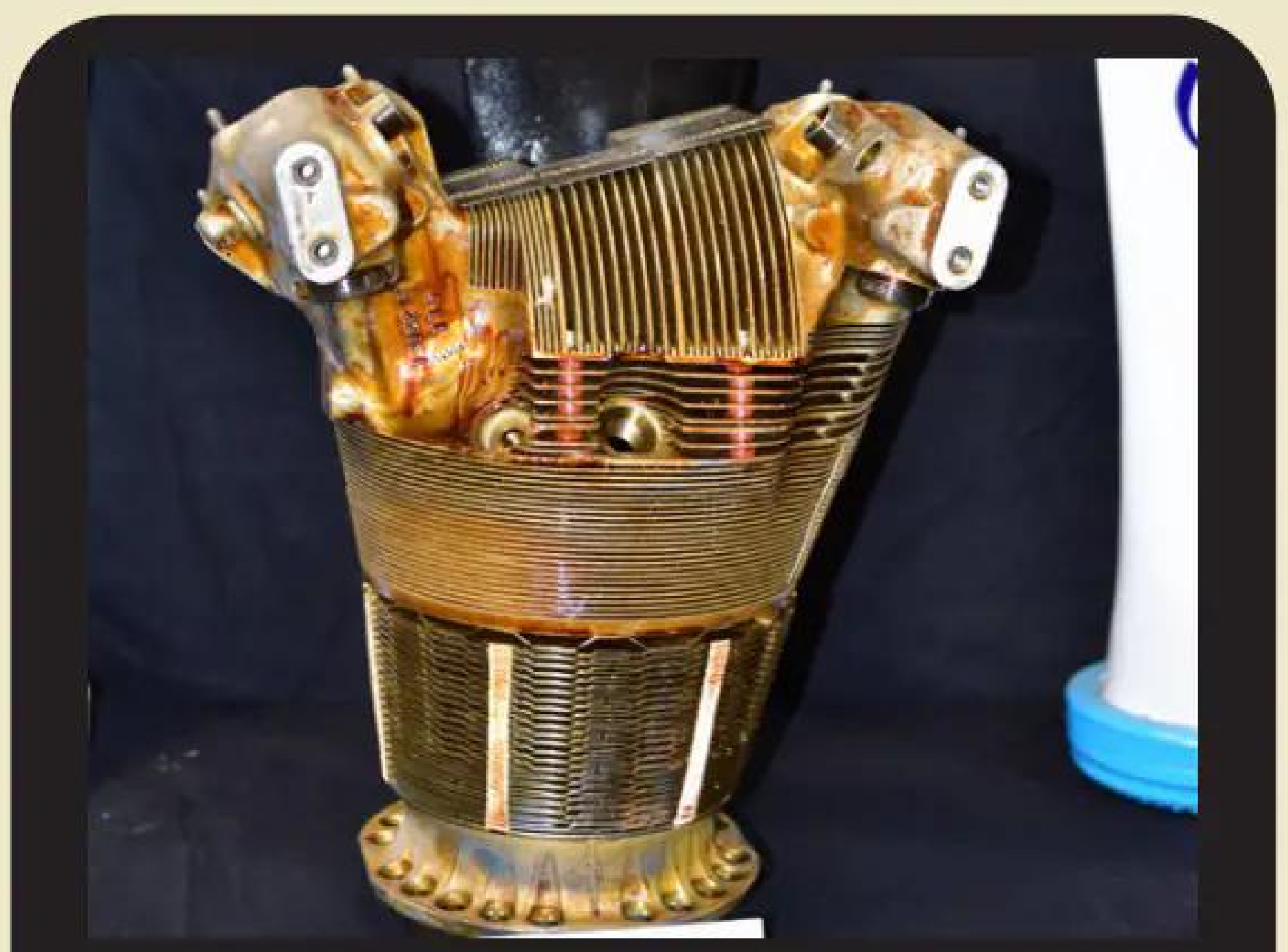
GREAT ITEMS FROM THE SUN AIR WAREHOUSE!

HISTORIC PARTS FOR RESTORATIONS OR FOR GREAT GIFTS



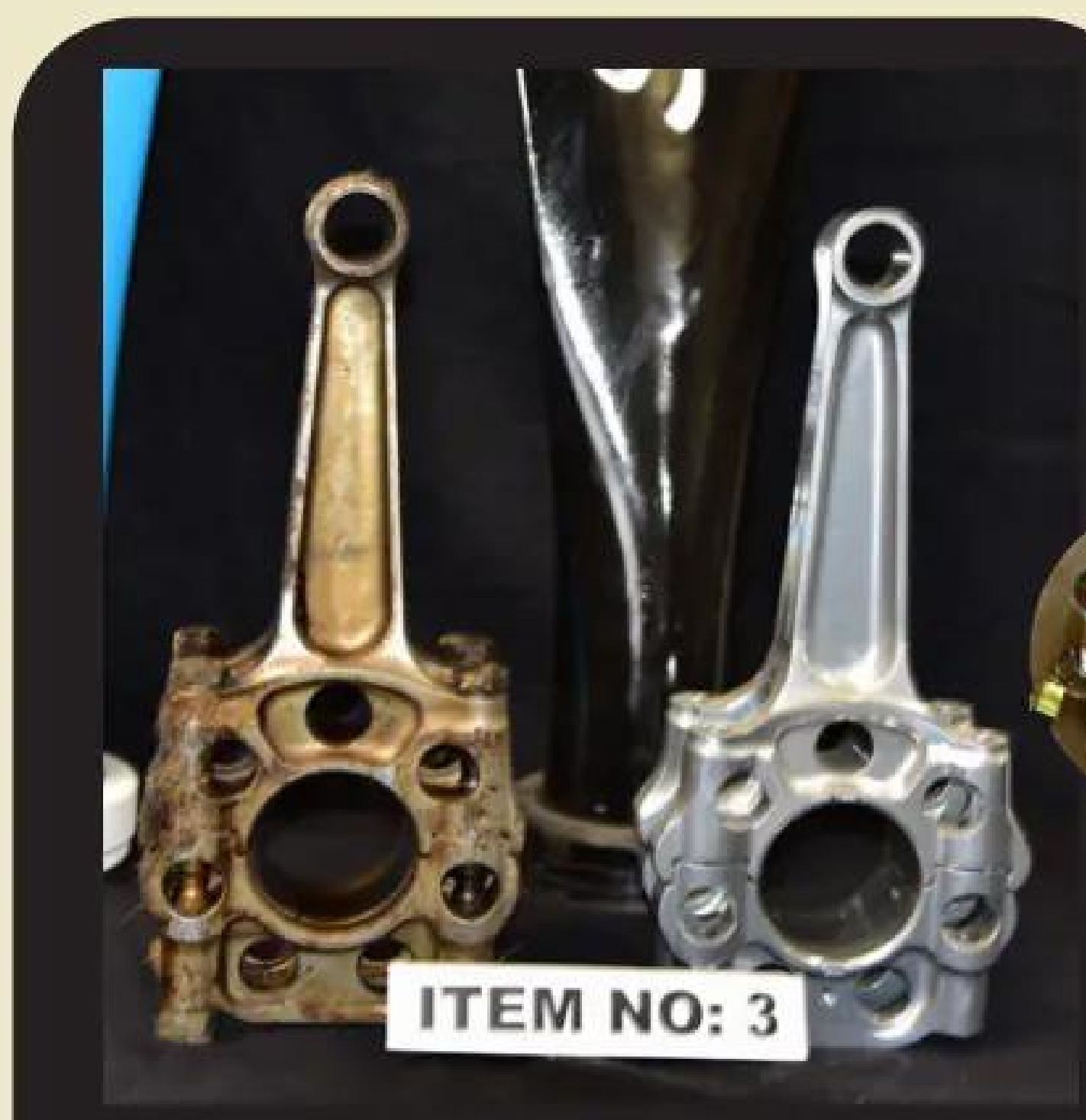
ITEM #1

NEW PRATT & WHITNEY R-4360 CYLINDER. THIS TYPE OF ENGINE WENT ON THE SPRUCE GOOSE, KC-97, B-36, SUPER CORSAIR. WEIGHT 40-LBS. SIZE 20-IN BY 11-IN BY 18-IN HIGH. THE ULTIMATE AMERICAN PISTON-ENGINE! **JUST $325**



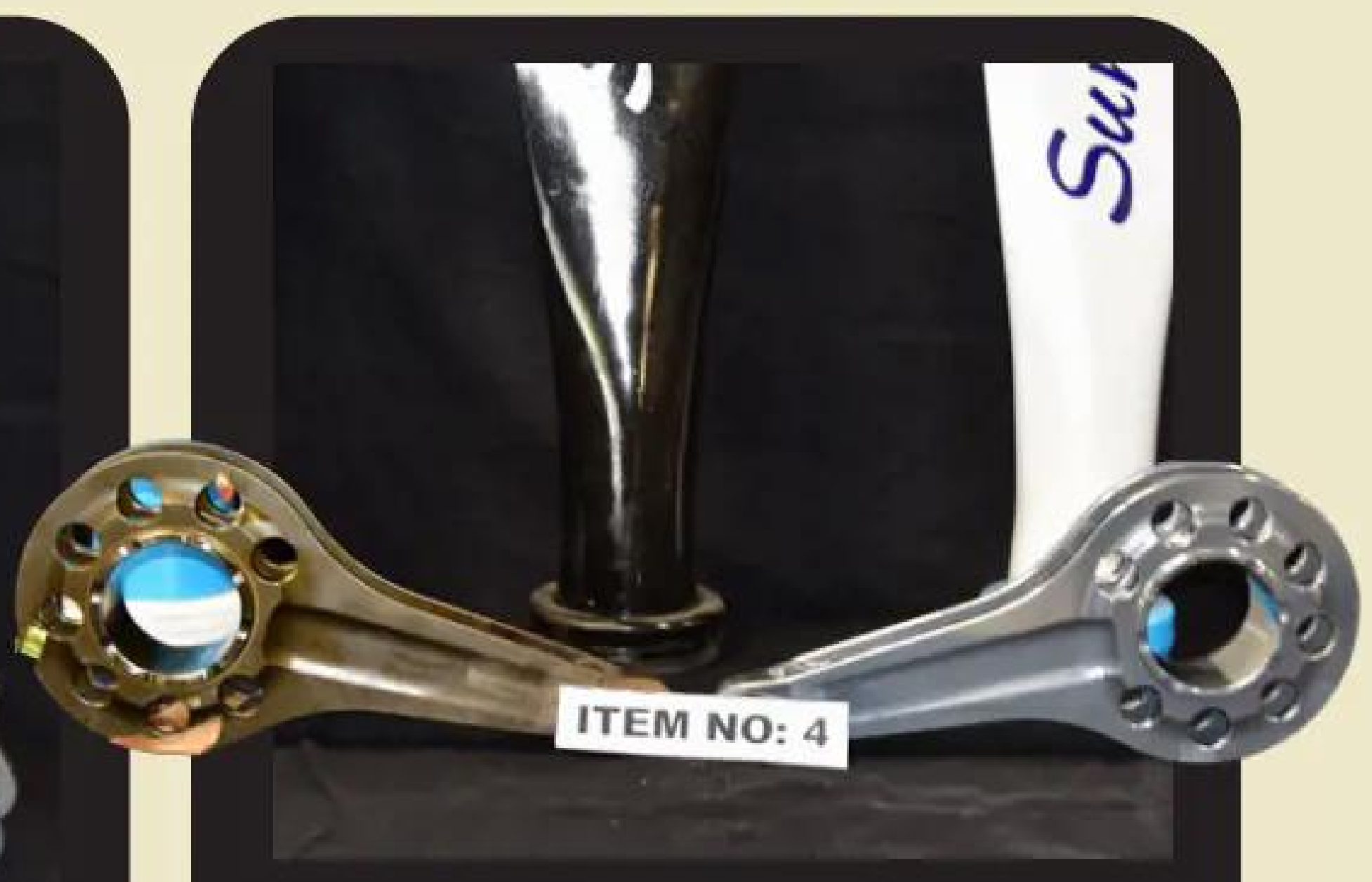
ITEM #2

NEW CURTISS WRIGHT R-3350 CYLINDER. THE BIGGEST FROM CW – SKYRAIDER, DC-7, SUPER CONSTELLATION, B-29. WEIGHT 50-LBS. SIZE 17-IN BY 12-IN BY 19-IN HIGH. A TRULY FAMOUS ENGINE. **JUST $385**



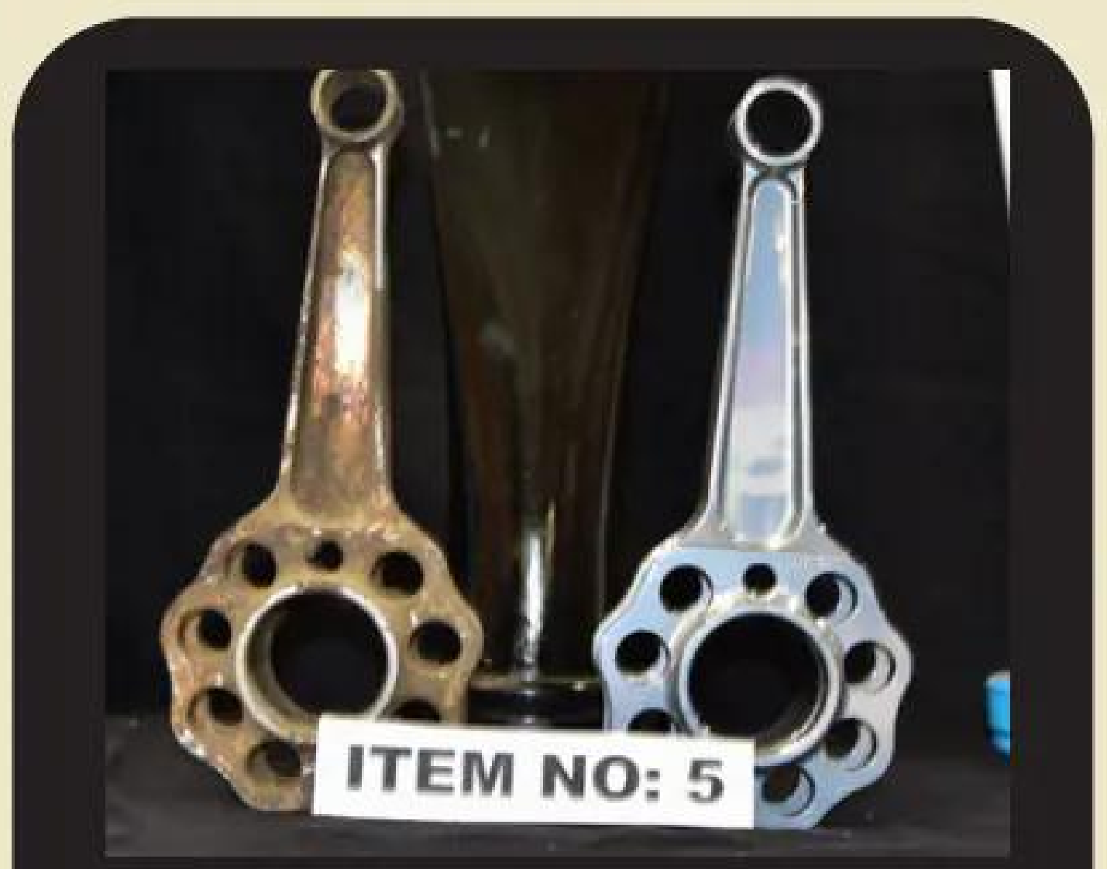
ITEM #3

PRATT & WHITNEY R-4360 MASTER ROD FROM AMERICA'S BIGGEST PISTON-ENGINE. WEIGHT 18-LBS. SIZE 20-IN BY 9-IN BY 3-IN. CHROME **JUST $275**, ORIGINAL **JUST $225**



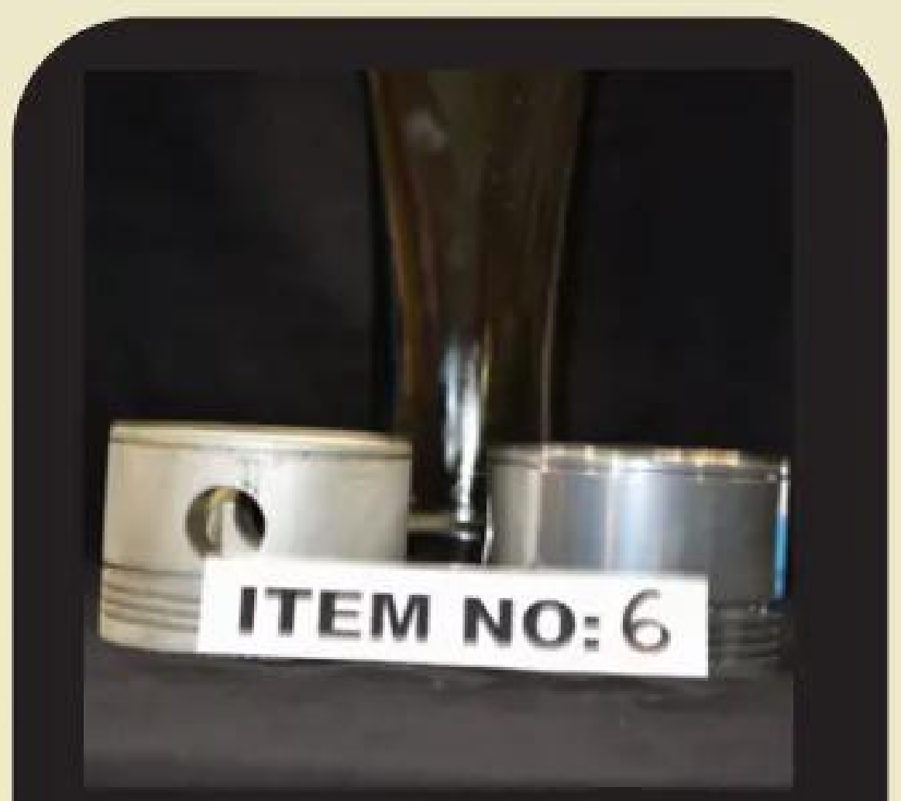
ITEM #4

CURTISS WRIGHT R-3350 MASTER ROD. A GREAT PART FROM THE ENGINE THAT POWERED MANY OF AMERICA'S FAMED AIRLINERS AND COMBAT AIRCRAFT. WEIGHT 18-LBS. SIZE 20-IN BY 9-IN BY 3-IN. CHROME **JUST $275**, ORIGINAL **JUST $225**



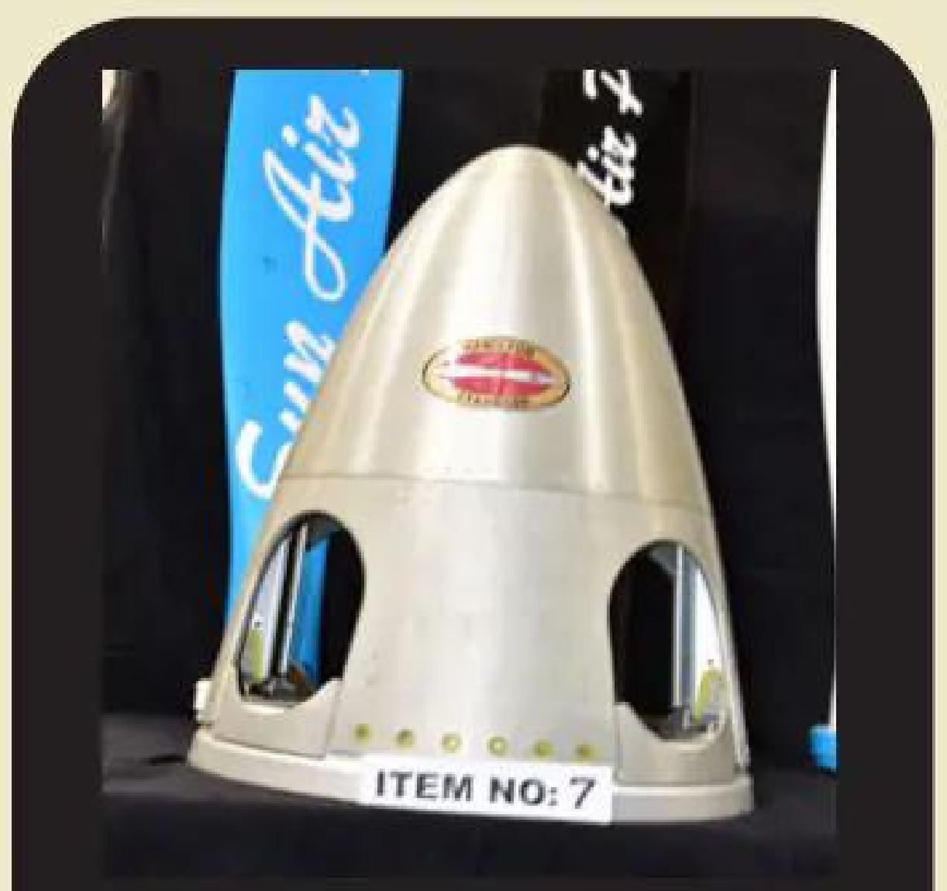
ITEM #5

PRATT & WHITNEY R-985 MASTER ROD. ONE OF HISTORY'S MOST FAMOUS ENGINES THAT POWERED THE TWIN BEECH, STAGGERWING, GOOSE, AND TOO MANY OTHERS TO NAME. WEIGHT 10-LBS. SIZE 16-IN BY 7-IN BY 4-IN. CHROME **JUST $195**, STOCK **JUST $150**



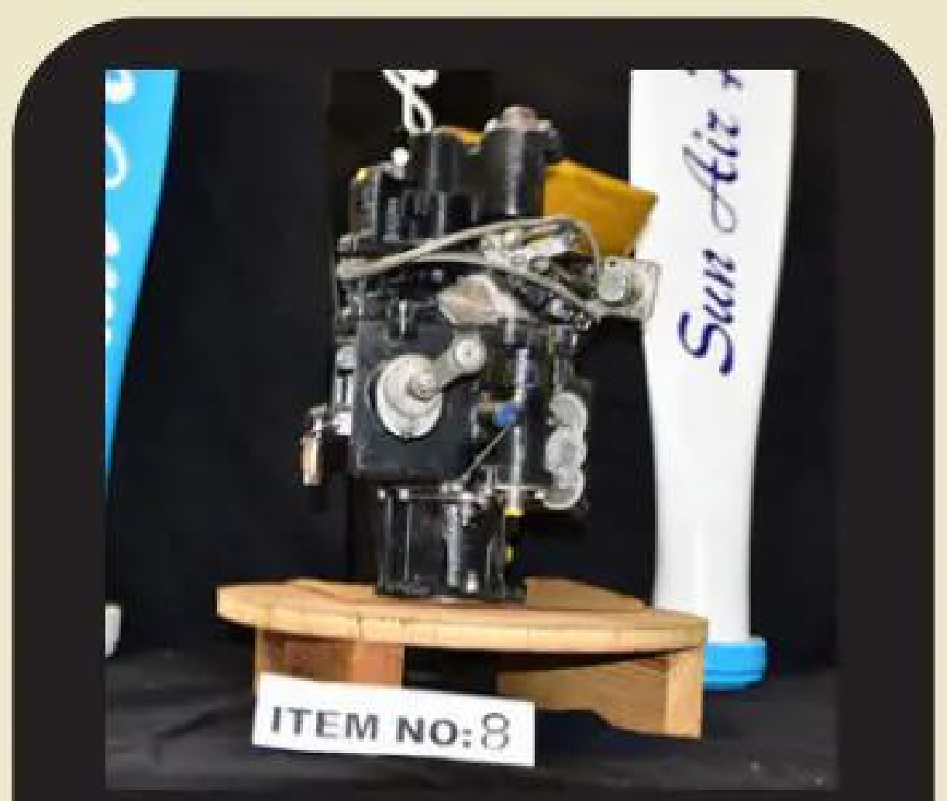
ITEM #6

PRATT & WHITNEY R-1830 TWIN WASP WWII PISTON. FITTED TO THE DC-3/C-47, B-24, PBY, TBD, P-43, AND TOO MANY OTHERS TO LIST. WEIGHT 5-LBS. 5.5-IN DIA BY 4-IN HEIGHT. CHROME **JUST $45**, BLASTED $35



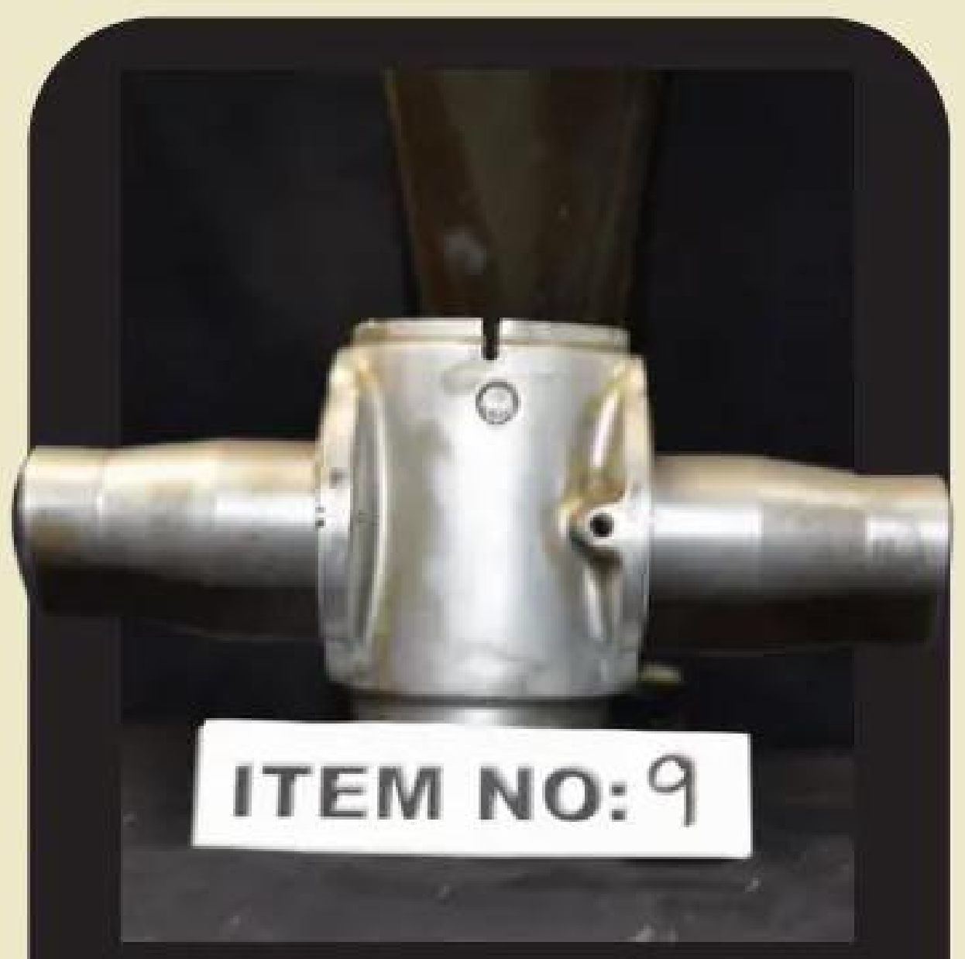
ITEM #7

NEW OLD STOCK SPINNER FROM THE FAMED DOUGLAS DC-7C – THE ULTIMATE AMERICAN PROPLINER. BACKING PLATE INCLUDED! WEIGHT 20-LBS. SIZE 23-IN BY 27-IN HIGH. THIS IS A RARE OPPORTUNITY AT **JUST $499**



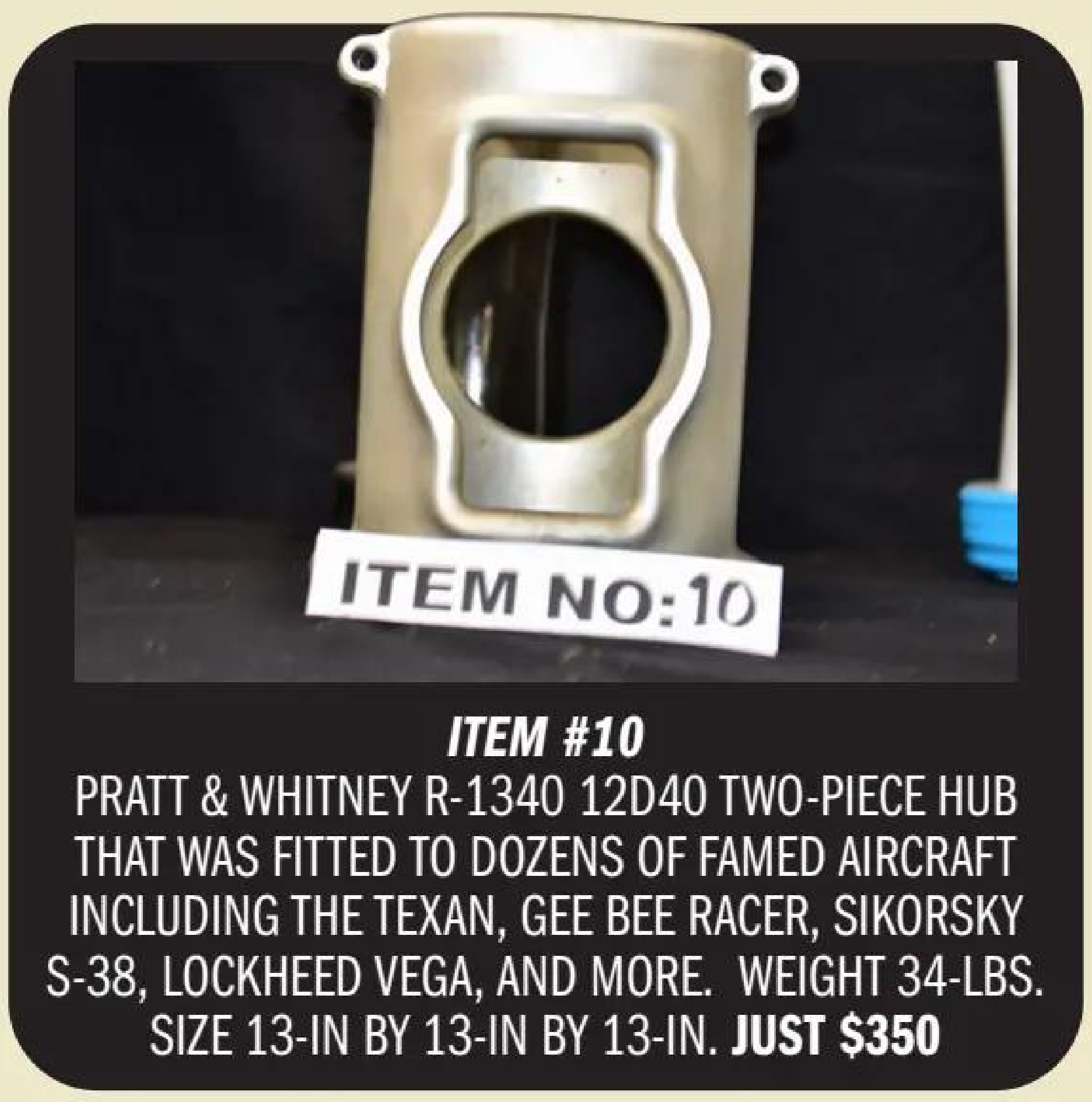
ITEM #8

J-57 TURBOJET FUEL CONTROLLER FROM THE MIGHTY EIGHT-ENGINE BOEING B-52 SUPERFORTRESS. WEIGHT 75-LBS. SIZE 16-IN BY 16-IN BY 21-IN. THIS INCREDIBLE PIECE OF INDUSTRIAL DESIGN IS IN OVERHAULED CONDITION AT **JUST $350**



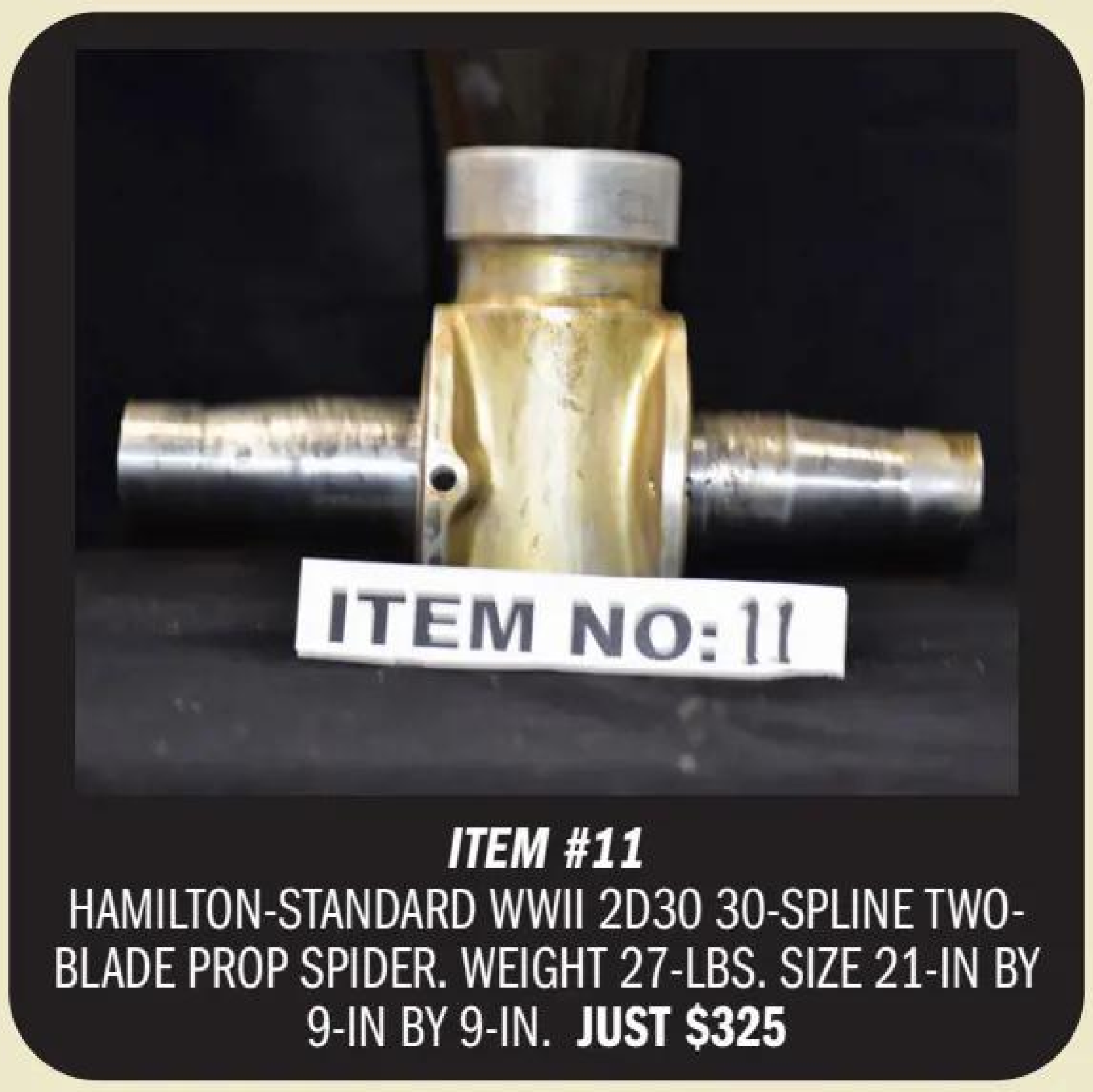
ITEM #9

HAMILTON-STANDARD WWII 12D40 40-SPLINE SPIDER. WEIGHT 32-LBS. SIZE 21-IN BY 9-IN BY 9-IN. THIS WENT ON THE T-6/HARVARD SERIES AND MANY OTHER GREAT AIRCRAFT AT **JUST $350**



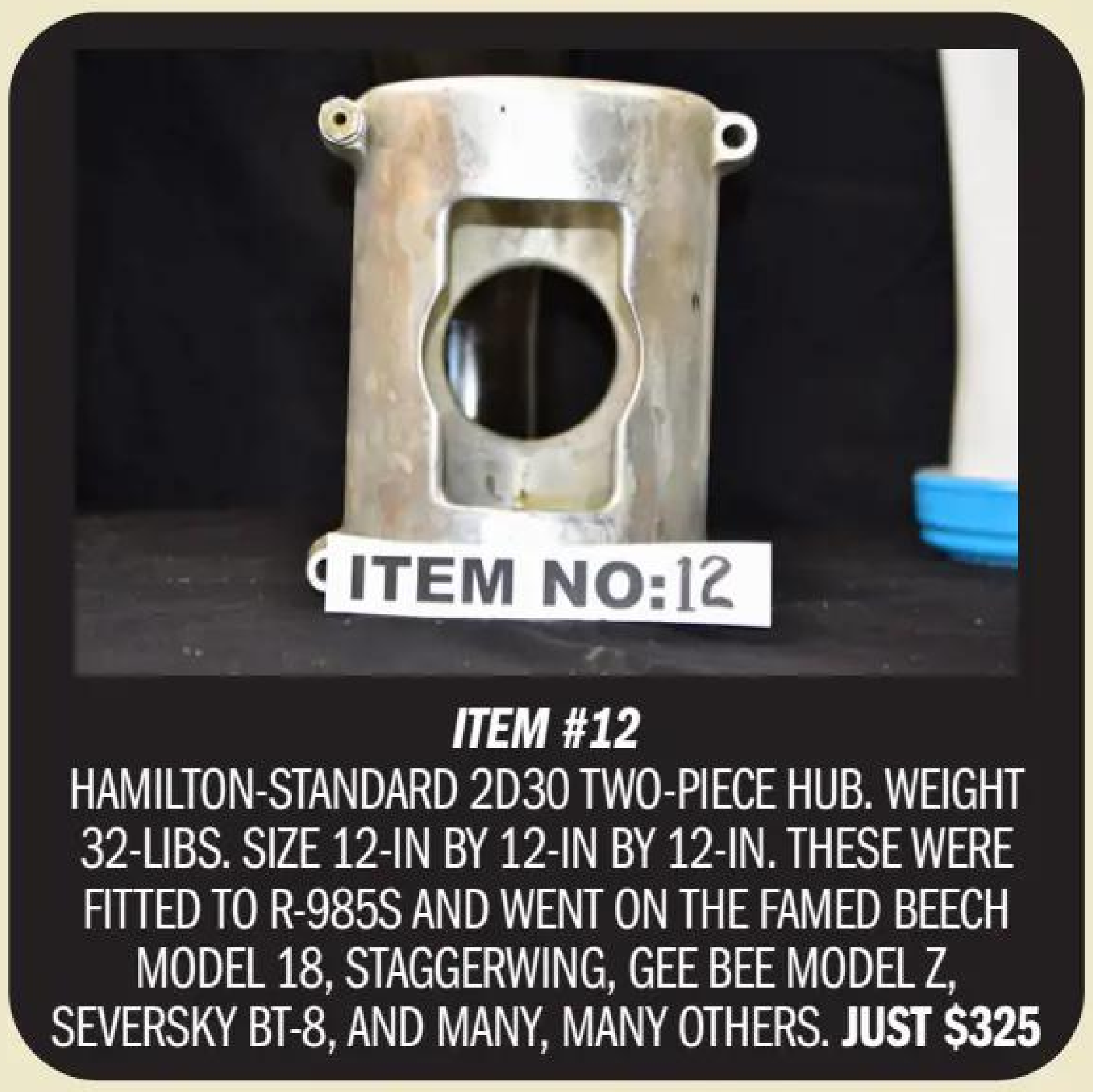
ITEM #10

PRATT & WHITNEY R-1340 12D40 TWO-PIECE HUB THAT WAS FITTED TO DOZENS OF FAMED AIRCRAFT INCLUDING THE TEXAN, GEE BEE RACER, SIKORSKY S-38, LOCKHEED VEGA, AND MORE. WEIGHT 34-LBS. SIZE 13-IN BY 13-IN BY 13-IN. **JUST $350**



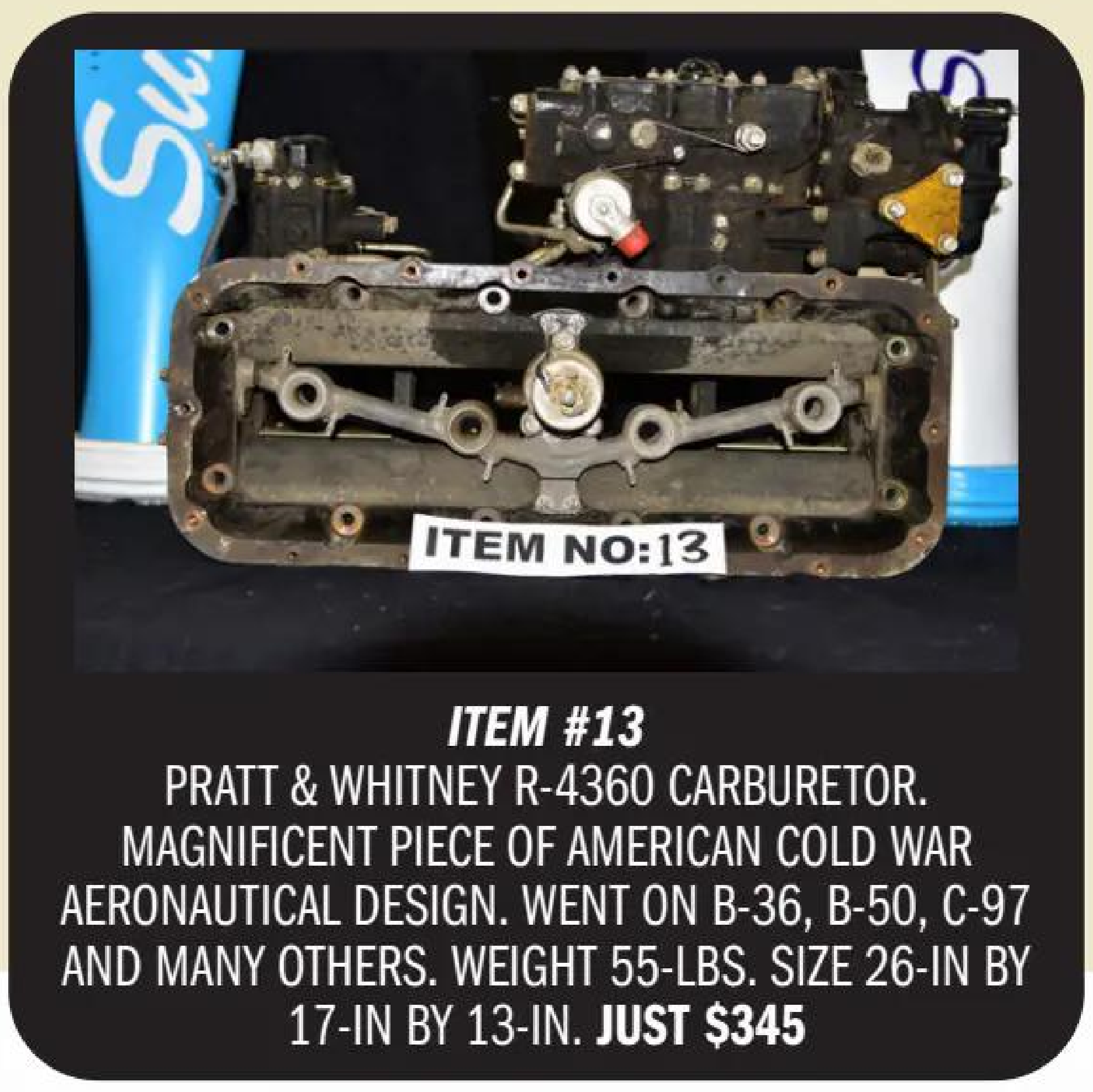
ITEM #11

HAMILTON-STANDARD WWII 2D30 30-SPLINE TWO-BLADE PROP SPIDER. WEIGHT 27-LBS. SIZE 21-IN BY 9-IN BY 9-IN. **JUST $325**



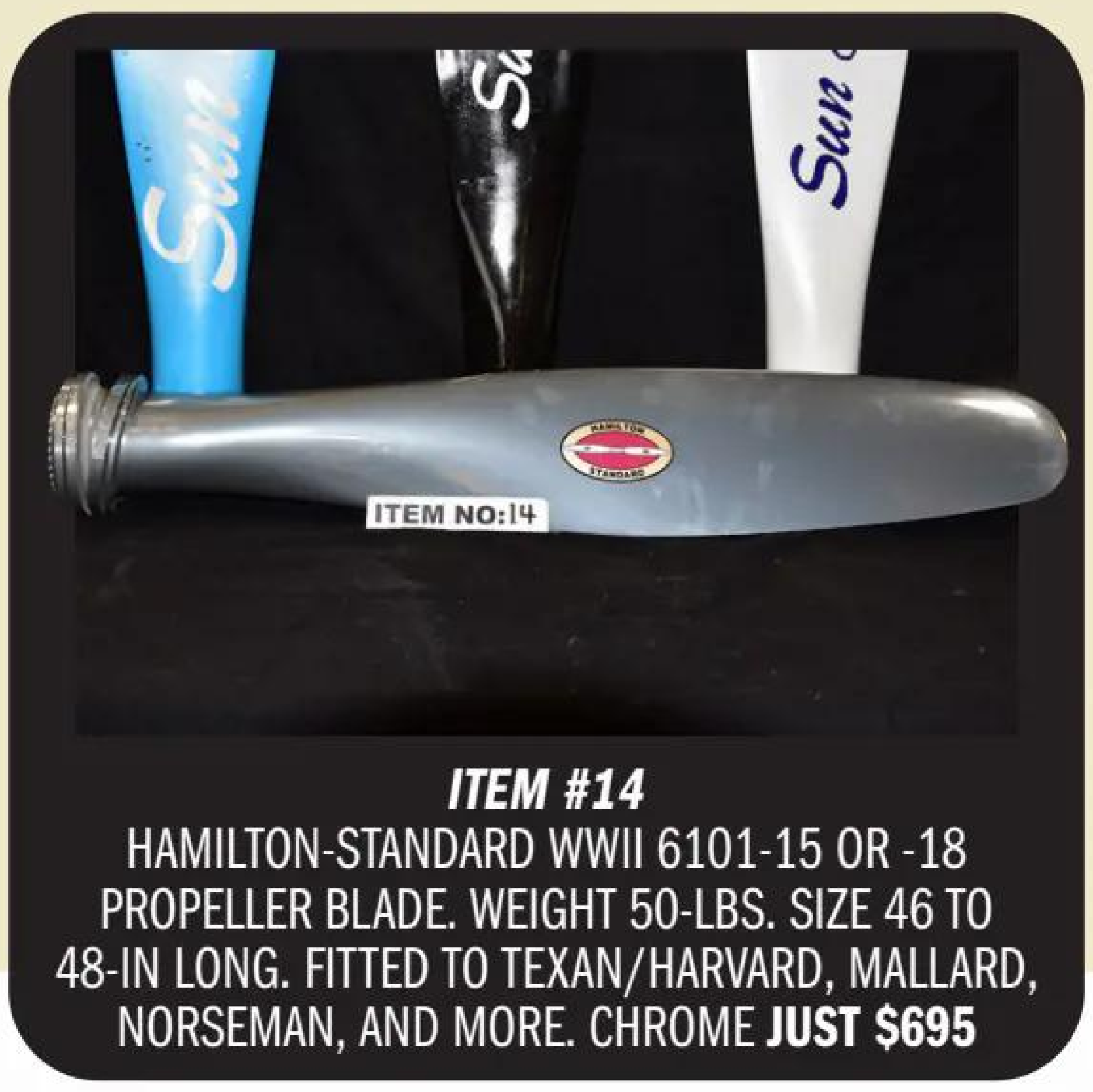
ITEM #12

HAMILTON-STANDARD 2D30 TWO-PIECE HUB. WEIGHT 32-LIBS. SIZE 12-IN BY 12-IN BY 12-IN. THESE WERE FITTED TO R-985S AND WENT ON THE FAMED BEECH MODEL 18, STAGGERWING, GEE BEE MODEL Z, SEVERSKY BT-8, AND MANY, MANY OTHERS. **JUST $325**



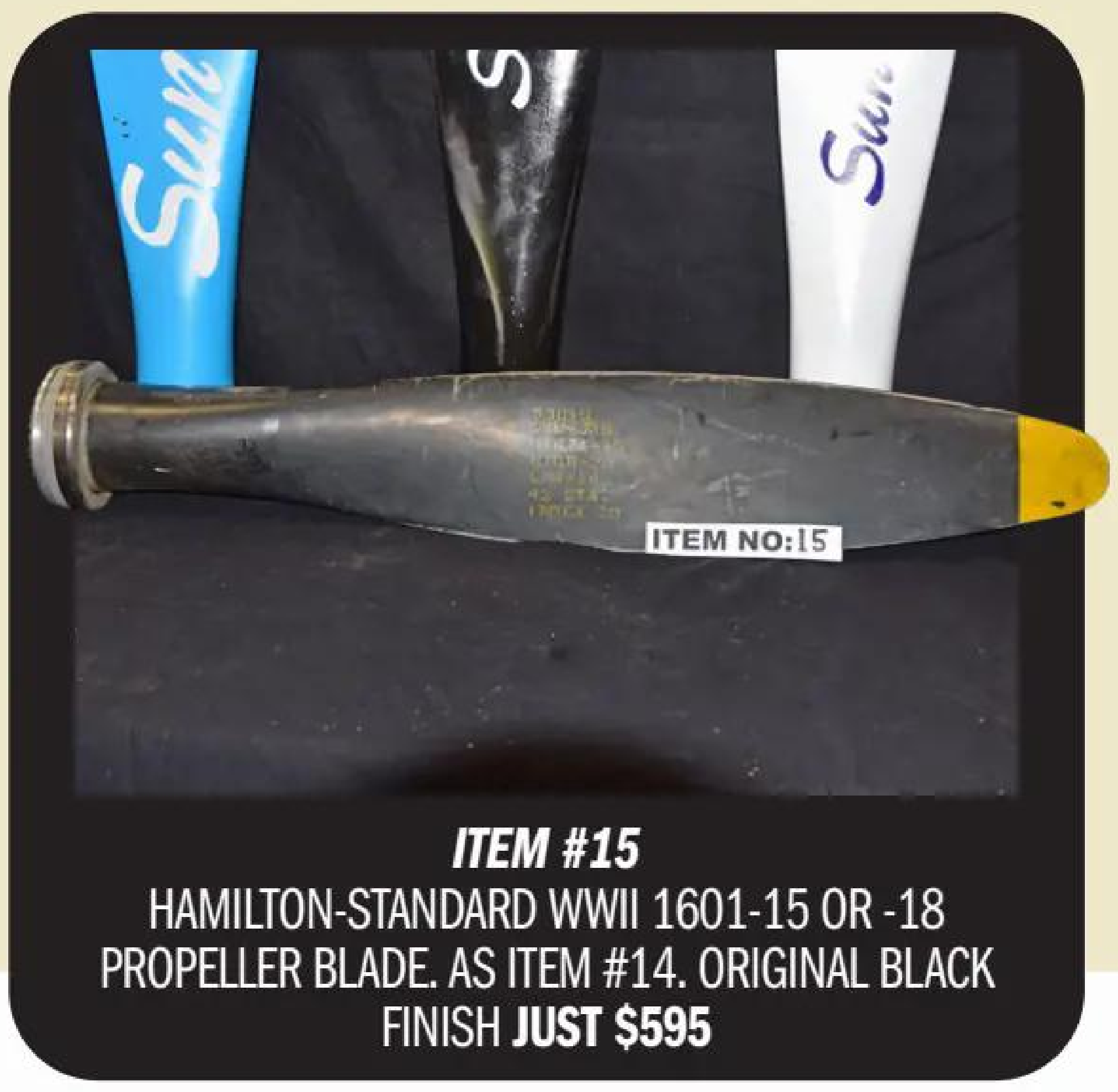
ITEM #13

PRATT & WHITNEY R-4360 CARBURETOR. MAGNIFICENT PIECE OF AMERICAN COLD WAR AERONAUTICAL DESIGN. WENT ON B-36, B-50, C-97 AND MANY OTHERS. WEIGHT 55-LBS. SIZE 26-IN BY 17-IN BY 13-IN. **JUST $345**



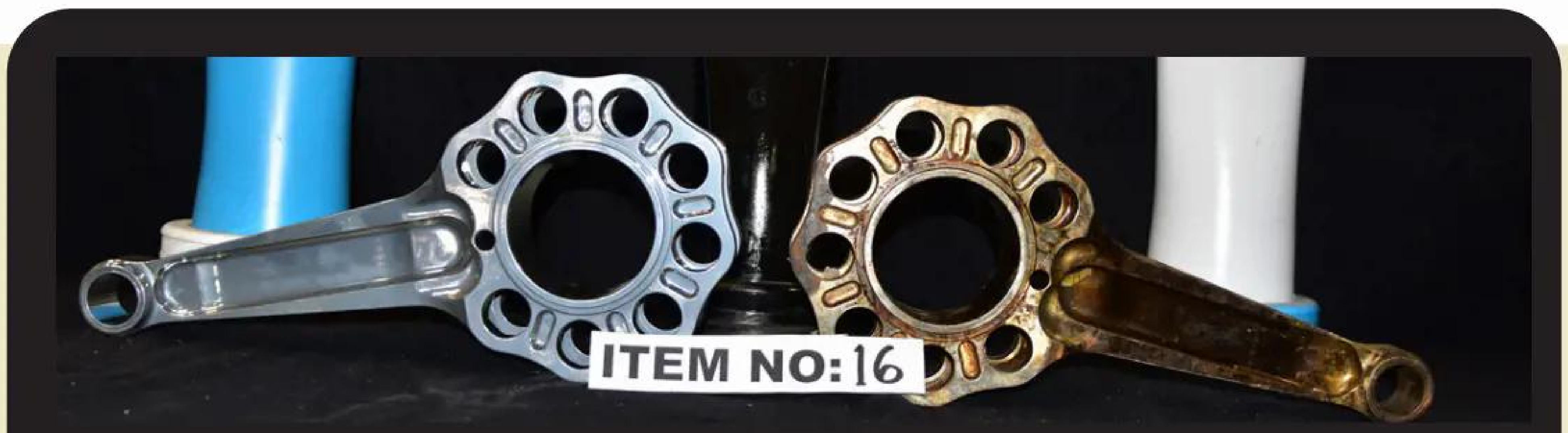
ITEM #14

HAMILTON-STANDARD WWII 6101-15 OR -18 PROPELLER BLADE. WEIGHT 50-LBS. SIZE 46 TO 48-IN LONG. FITTED TO TEXAN/HARVARD, MALLARD, NORSEMAN, AND MORE. CHROME **JUST $695**



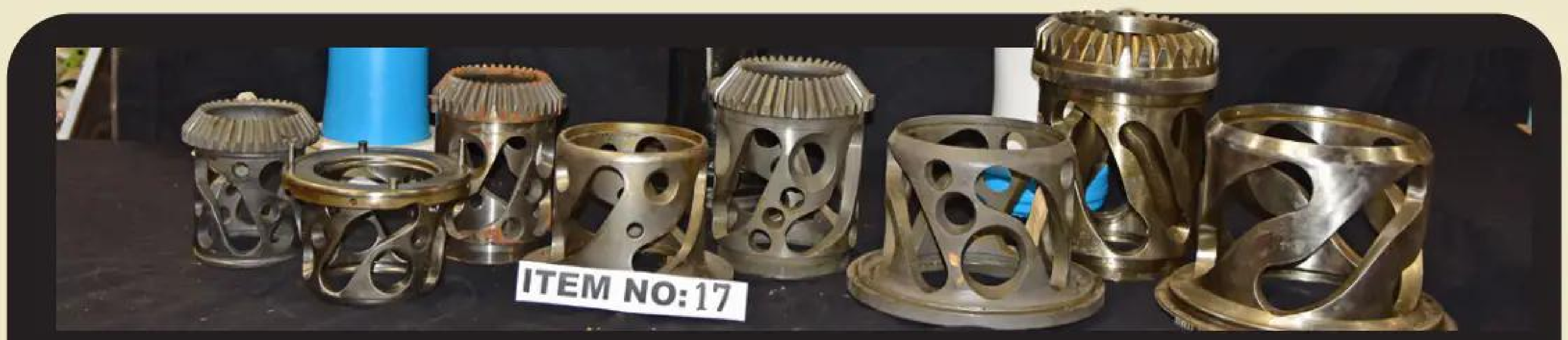
ITEM #15

HAMILTON-STANDARD WWII 1601-15 OR -18 PROPELLER BLADE. AS ITEM #14. ORIGINAL BLACK FINISH **JUST $595**



ITEM #16

PRATT & WHITNEY R-2800 MASTER ROD. WEIGHT 18-LBS. SIZE 18-IN HIGH BY 8-IN WIDE. FOR CORSAIR, B-26, HELLCAT, AND MORE. CHROME **JUST $325**, ORIGINAL **JUST $295**



ITEM #17

VARIOUS HAMILTON-STANDARD INNER AND OUTER ROTATING CAMS TO FEATHER PROPELLERS. SMALL **JUST $120**, LARGE **JUST $150**

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	ITEM #3	$275/$225	
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	ITEM #6	$45/$35	
	ITEM #7	$499	
	ITEM #8	$350	
	ITEM #9	$350	
	ITEM #10	$350	
	ITEM #11	$325	
	ITEM #12	$325	
	ITEM #13	$345	
	ITEM #14	$695	
	ITEM #15	$595	
	ITEM #16	$325/$295	
	ITEM #17	$120/$150	
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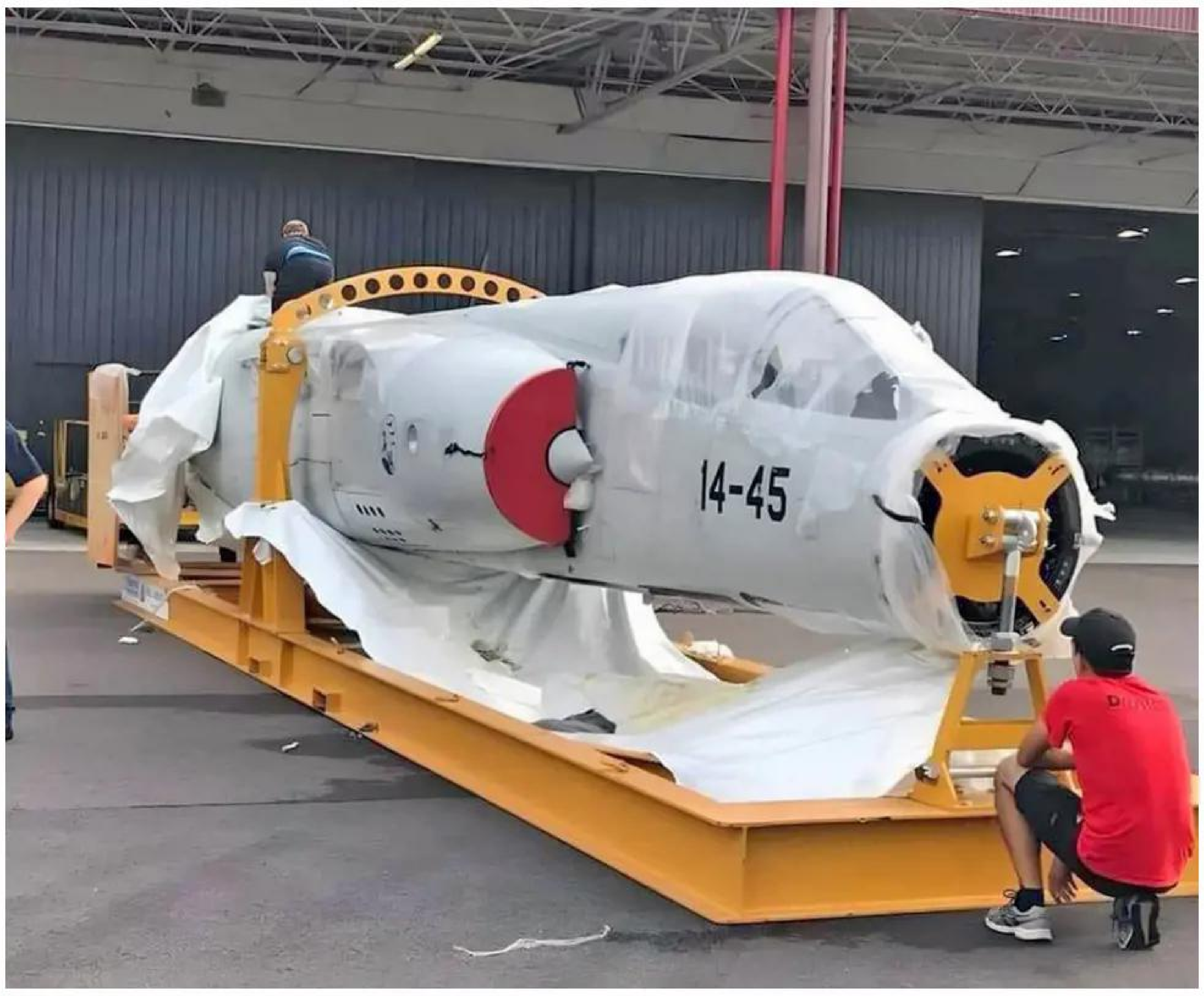


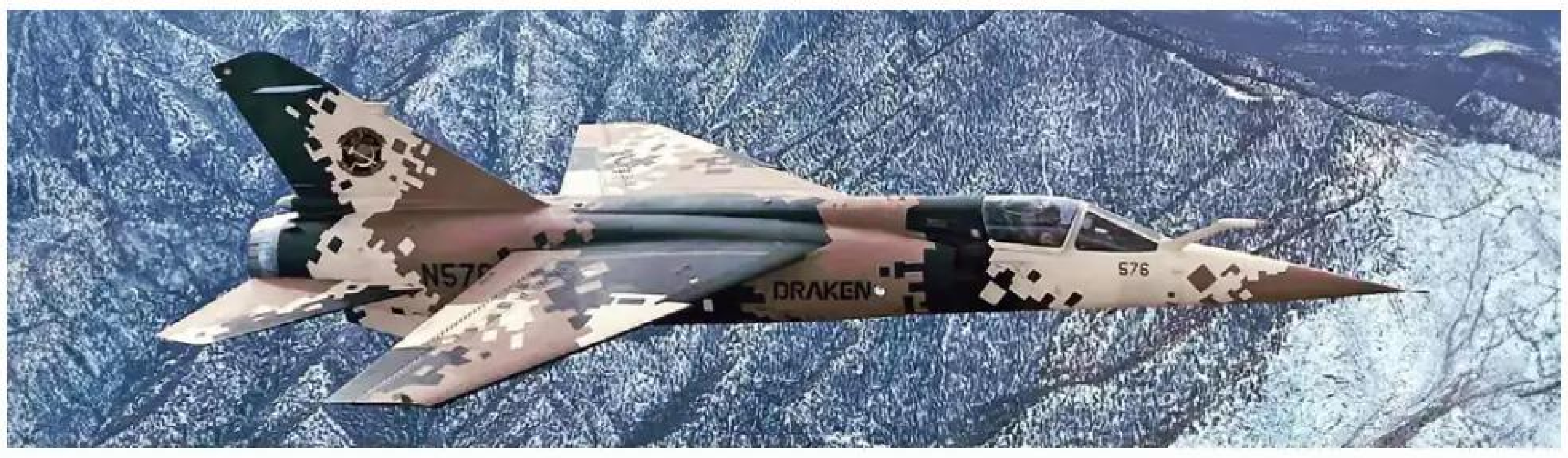
Mirage F.1 serial 14-45 arriving at the Draken Lakeland facility. In Spanish service, the Mirage was known as the C.14A, C-14B (F.1EE), and C.14C (F.1EDA).

MIRAGES FOR DRAKEN

Reinforcing its position as America's largest operator of high-performance ex-military aircraft, Draken Inc. has acquired 22 Dassault Mirage F.1M (20) and F.1B (two) aircraft from the Spanish Air Force and these are arriving at the company's facility in Lakeland, Florida. The elegant French designed and built F.1 will form the backbone of Draken's fleet of advanced, radar-equipped, supersonic aggressor fleet. Spain operated the Mirage between 1975 and 2013, purchasing 91 aircraft. In conjunction with Paramount Aerospace, a South African defense contractor, Draken is developing a plan to regenerate the Mirage fleet. This is being done in conjunction with a dozen Atlas Cheetah aircraft that Draken also purchased. In 1996, Spain spent almost $100,000,000 upgrading the Mirages with cockpit enhancements, LCD MFDs, Advanced HUD, INS/GPS, electronic attack systems upgrades, etc. These aircraft will join Draken's fleet of Douglas A-4K Skyhawks and Aero Vodochody L-159Es to make for an extremely impressive fleet of Jet Warbirds. The aircraft provide adversary training at Nellis AFB

The Mirage on its gear as reassembly begins.

Mirage F.1 C.14-73 fully assembled and operational at Lakeland with the American civil registration N576EM.



It appears that the Mirages will eventually lose their Spanish AF gray in favor of this camouflage scheme. This aircraft s N565EK lex-C.14-44).

Mirage F.1CE 46-13 in Spanish Air Force service along with a Hornet.

Work will soon begin on the restoration of Yanks rare R-4B helicopter. Readers that may have parts for the R-4 are requested to contact the Editor.

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SIKORSKY R-4 RESTORATION

Yanks Air Museum has announced that Sikorsky R-4B USAAF 43-46534 helicopter has been removed from storage and will soon begin an in-house restoration to airworthy condition, thus making it the world's oldest flyable helicopter. This significant early helicopter was obtained by the museum in 1990 and placed in storage. "Historically, this is a very important aircraft," said museum founder Charles Nichols. "I made the decision to bring it out of storage and start an in-house restoration. The airframe is in pretty good condition and restoration should not be a major problem." This particular aircraft was delivered to the USAAF on 23 August 1944 and delivered to the 2139th AAF Base Unit at Freeman Field in Indiana. By December of that year, it was with the 3502th AAF Base Unit Tech Training School at Chanute AAF in Illinois. In May 1945, the helicopter transferred yet again to the 3706th AAF Base Unit at Sheppard AAF in Texas. It is presumed the R-4B was used for training at these various facilities. Approximately eleven R-4s exist in varying conditions so the restoration will make a significant addition to the small group of survivors.

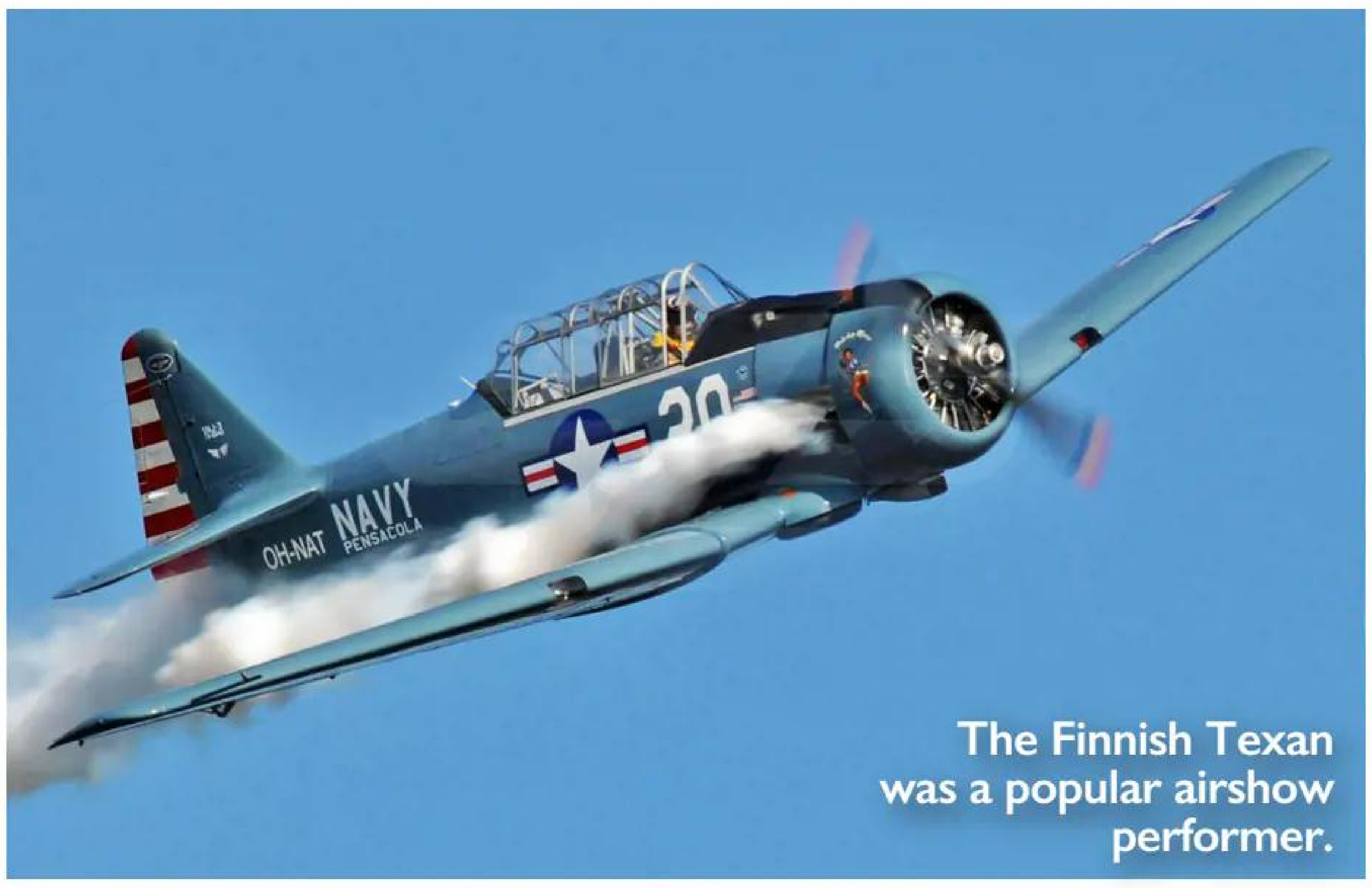
RICHARD GRACE

One of the dynamic figures in British Warbird aviation has died. Richard Grace lost his battle with cancer on 15 October after heroically fighting the disease. Grace had operated Air Leasing and Ultimate Warbird Flights and had been involved in aviation his entire life. As the son of the late Nick and Carolyn Grace, he flew in a variety of vintage aircraft at an early age. At 16, he went aloft in the Graces' two-seat Spitfire ML407. Obtaining his private pilot's license, Richard was also very interested in aerobatics and aviation engineering. This led him to eventually purchase three Cassutt Formula One racers, resulting in the Dukes of Cassutt display team. He would also form another team with Pitts Specials. He flew the Spitfire for the first time during October 2007 and began displaying it at airshows. This would lead to restoring, maintaining, and flying aircraft like the Buchon, Fury, Yak 3, P-51, P-47, Hurricane, and several Spitfires. In 1979, Nick and Carolyn Grace found two Spitfire hulks and decided to buy and restore the aircraft. Nick was extremely enthusiastic about the Spitfire and was a rising star in the British Warbird scene. Unfortunately, he was killed in a car crash in 1988. This led Carolyn to learn how to fly the Spitfire and she became the first female Spitfire pilot to do aerial displays. She felt she needed to continue Nick's legacy and would go on to accumulate 900 hours of Spitfire time. While she and Richard were visiting Australia, they were in a car crash on 2 December 2022 and Carolyn died. At that time, doctors discovered Richard's illness.

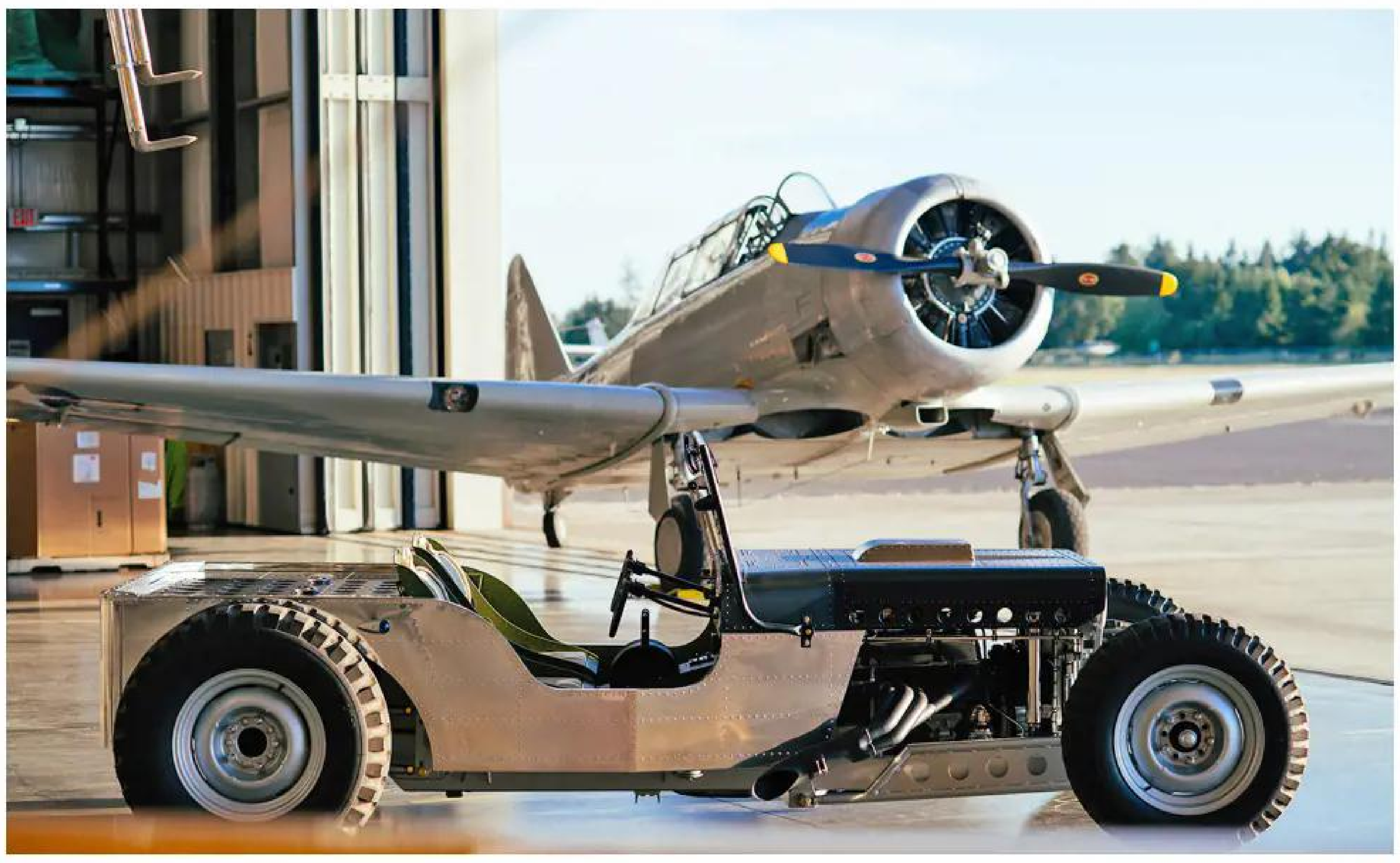
Richard Grace was a leader in the British vintage and veteran aircraft world. (P. Makanna/GHOSTS)

FINLAND'S TEXAN

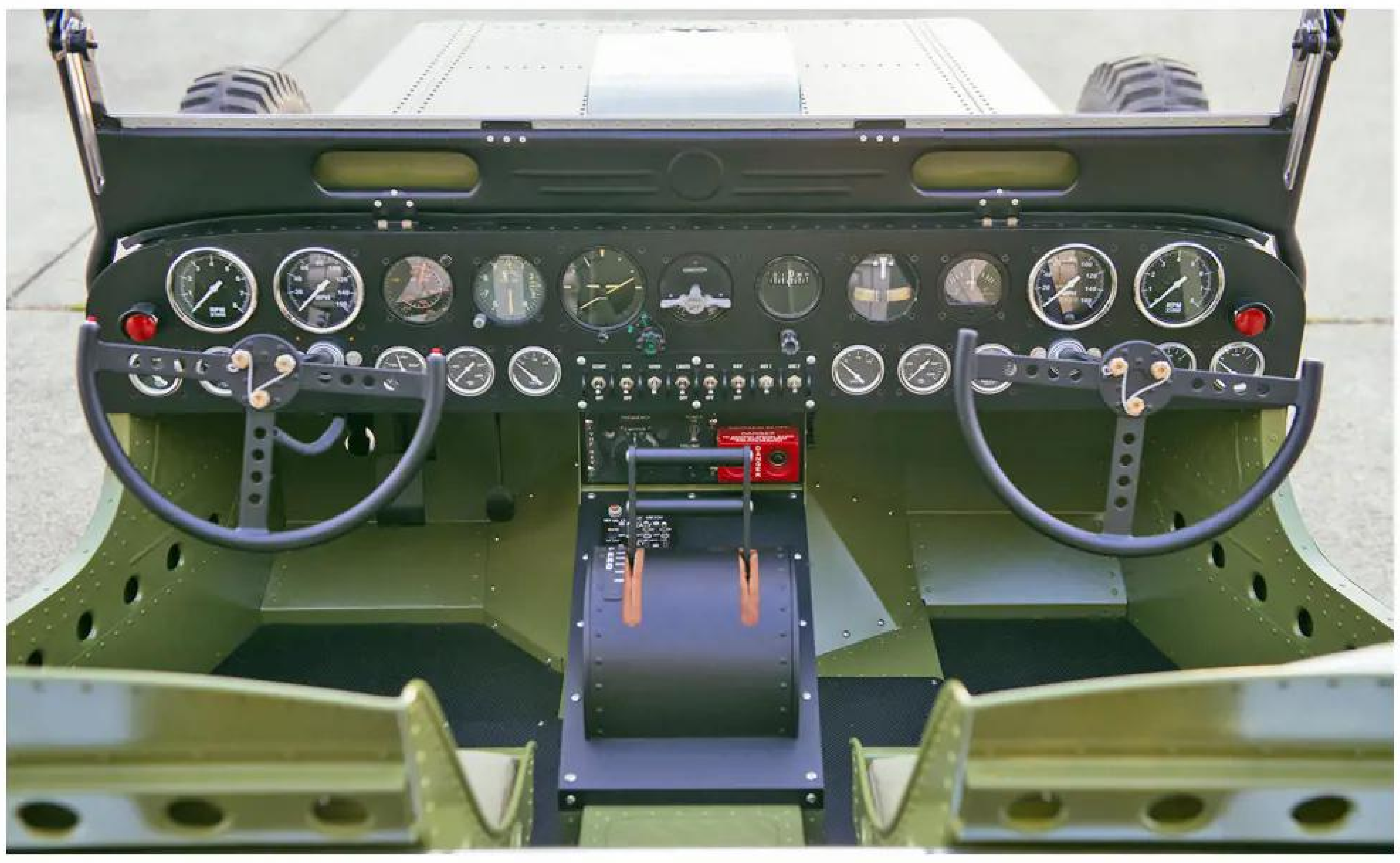
A tragic accident saw the only operational North American Texan in Finland destroyed and the two aboard killed. The aircraft, which was registered OH-NAT, had been sold to a German owner and it is thought that the owner and another pilot were aboard the aircraft when it went down on takeoff from Rayskala Airfield on 16 October. As with many of the surviving Texans, it seems that this aircraft had a long history and was originally constructed as AT-6A USAAC 41-16462 before going to the Navy as SNJ-3 BuNo 01840. After the war, it was sold surplus as NC66841. There was a big market supplying US civil-registered Texans to foreign nations and the plane was overhauled and went to Sweden's *Flygvapnet* as Fv 16244. After use in Sweden, it was sold on to the Argentine Navy where it flew as 0400 and EAN-223. The next stop was the Paraguayan Navy where it was serial 400. Sold surplus in the US, it became N4488W before going to Finland where it became that country's only operational Warbird.



The Finnish Texan was a popular airshow performer.



Cameron Aamodt's WWII tribute vehicle combines a Jeep, a hot rod, and lots of authentic aviation components.



Aircraft yokes and original instruments complete the bomber-panel look.

AND NOW FOR SOMETHING COMPLETELY DIFFERENT

Cameron Aamodt is a structural mechanic in the aviation world. He has been a long-time fabricator and has enjoyed building hot rods as a hobby. He decided about three years ago to combine both skills and build a WWII aviation tribute vehicle completely from scratch. Using a rotisserie mount, Cameron mounted an old Jeep body and got to work. The frame uses thick-wall rectangular tubing to balance the difference caused by the lightweight aluminum body and V-8 350-hp crate engine with automatic transmission for reliability, minimal maintenance, and drivability. He incorporated a 1960 F-100 front axle for handling the larger Jeep tires at high speeds and then installed a 12-bolt Chevy axle in the rear. The result is this WWII Jeep/hot rod with an exterior of polished aluminum and button head rivets. Rejecting welding for riveting, Cameron painstakingly shot over 4500 aviation-grade rivets, ensuring a flawless exterior. The interior resembles a bomber cockpit. It has dual functioning yokes, a full gauge panel including vintage aviation gauges that are all functional via vacuum system, bomber seats, bombs for fuel tanks, .50-caliber guns for turn signals, navigation lights, recognition lights, and the list goes on and on. This labor of love took 3.5 years and 4000 man-hours. This is certainly a unique, eye-catching vehicle that will also be a hit at any airshow.

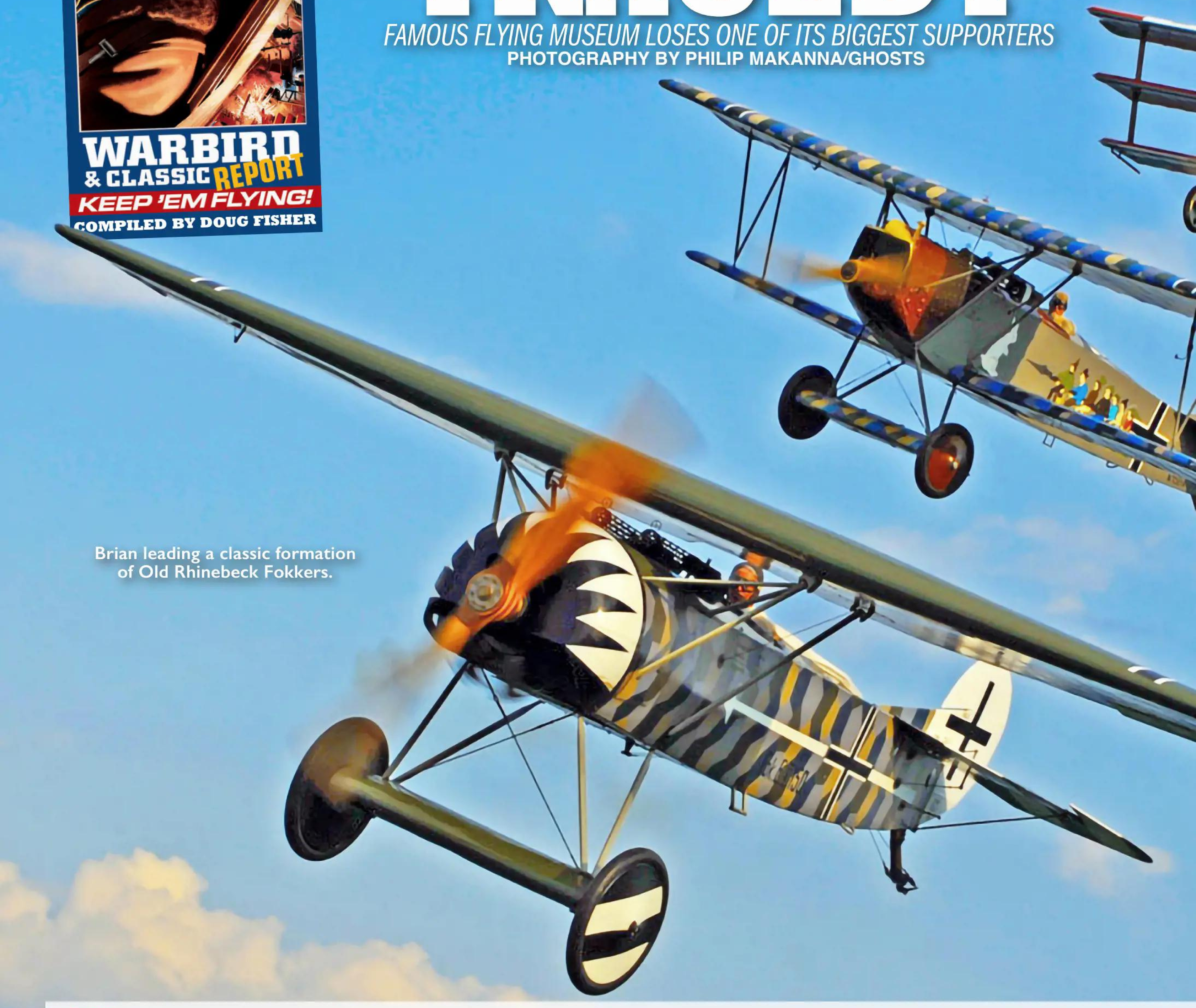
Aircraft harnesses, polished aluminum panels, and button-head rivets contribute to the aviation look and feel.

WARBIRD & CLASSIC REPORT
KEEP 'EM FLYING!
COMPILED BY DOUG FISHER

OLD RHINEBECK TRAGEDY

FAMOUS FLYING MUSEUM LOSES ONE OF ITS BIGGEST SUPPORTERS

PHOTOGRAPHY BY PHILIP MAKANNA/GHOSTS



Brian leading a classic formation of Old Rhinebeck Fokkers.

When it comes to locations for the flying of vintage and veteran aircraft, few are nicer than Old Rhinebeck Aerodrome in upstate New York — especially as the colors of fall envelop the small airfield. Operating since the late 1950s under the masterful guidance of the late Cole Palen (an historic aviation visionary that realized the importance of preserving and flying aircraft from the Great War), Old Rhinebeck had become a popular attraction for aviation enthusiasts from all over the world. Each fall, the field put on feats of WWI "derring-do" as the biplanes and triplanes from the Great War spluttered aloft to thrill spectators with their flying. There were also vaudeville acts that were popular with all ages. Then, a variety of vintage aircraft would take passengers aloft to view the fall colors as well as the historic landscape.

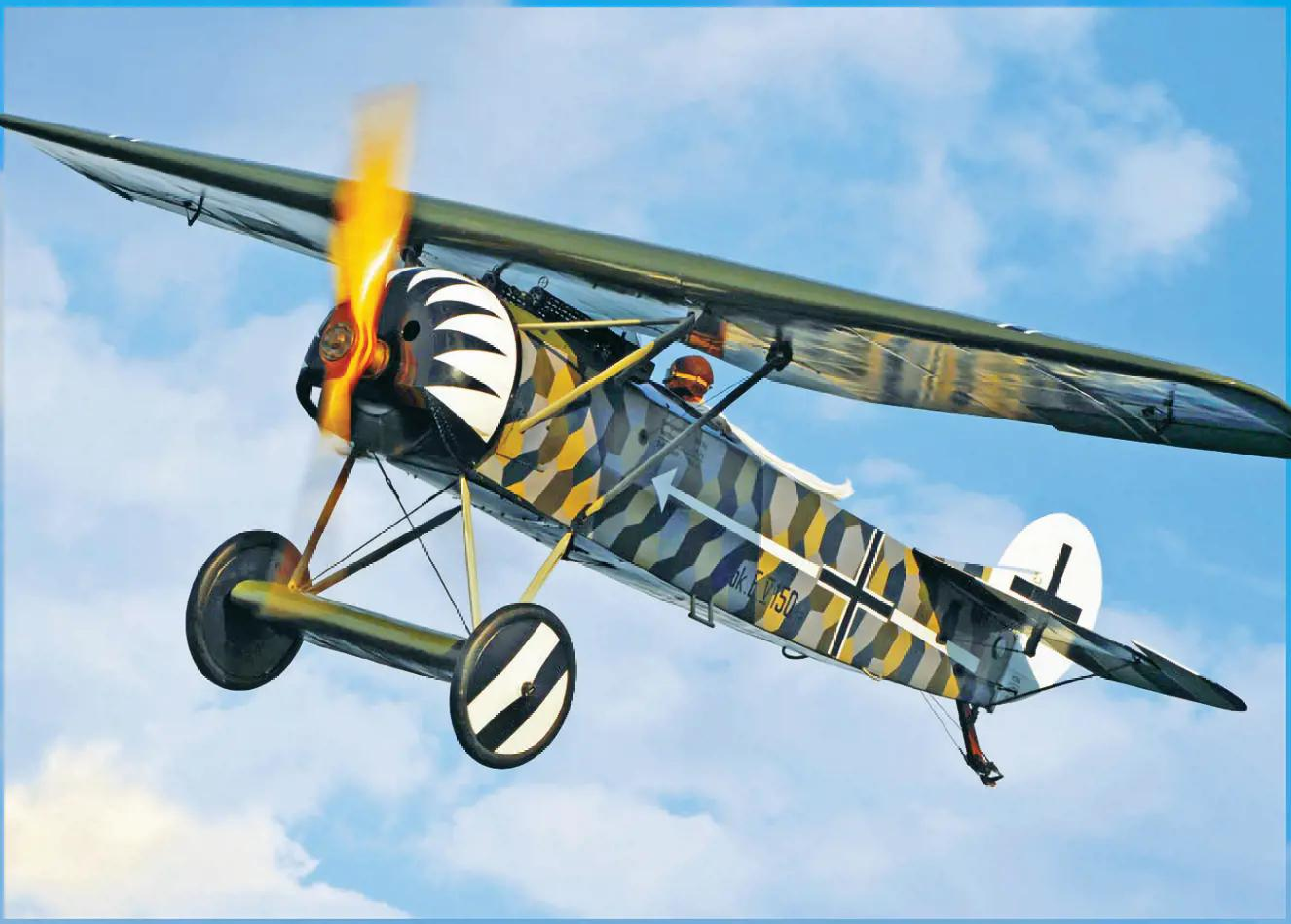
Sadly, we all know that any form of aviation brings along its own inherent risks. Those risks culminated on 5 October in the crash of a replica parasol-wing Fokker D.VIII that claimed the life of pilot/builder Brian Coughlin of Cazenovia, New York. A long-time museum volunteer as well as an important board member, 60-year-old Coughlin had been more recently involved in expansion plans for Old Rhinebeck. Over the years, he built several Fokker Dr. I triplane replicas as well as two Fokker D.VIII "flying razor" replicas, including the aircraft in which he died. Brian was an integral part of the museum and his death will greatly affect the operation of the museum. The museum features aerial displays each Saturday/Sunday from June through October. The museum announced that shows for the rest of October had been cancelled.

Brian was up flying in the D.VIII, registered N94100 and which featured an original rotary engine, at about 3 pm when it appears that a fire broke out in the engine compartment. Spectators report seeing the D.VIII, which was one of the Great War's more advanced pursuit aircraft, begin trailing smoke. They then saw the nose of the aircraft drop as the plane disappeared into a stand of trees and bushes at the south end of the field. It appears that the

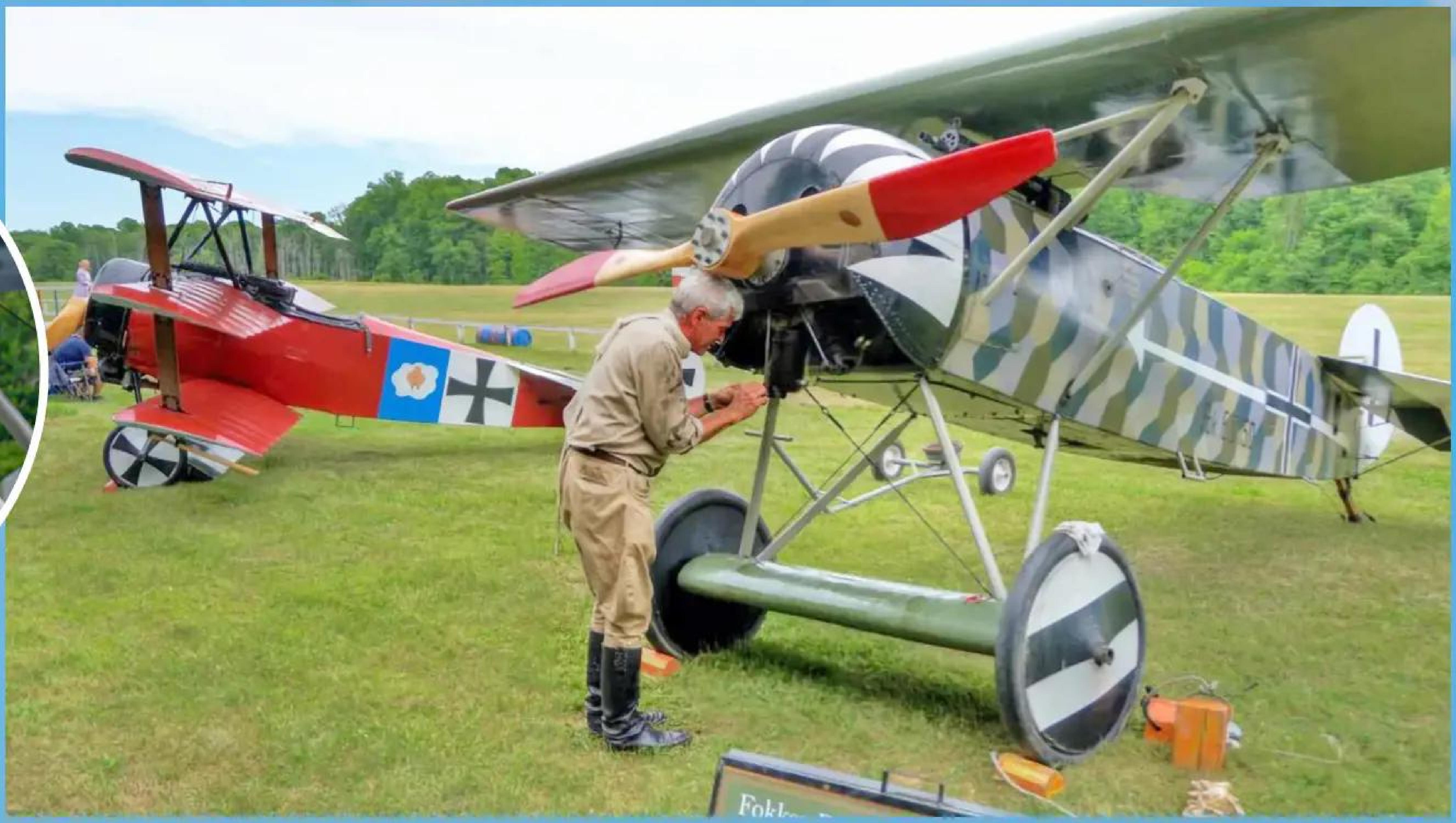
An enthusiast, restorer, and pilot, the loss of Brian Coughlin will be deeply felt at Old Rhinebeck

plane crashed straight down and exploded. Emergency crews had to battle through trees and brush at the south end of the field to reach the accident site but, unfortunately, there was nothing they could do. Brian has survived a 2005 crash in a replica WWI French fighter.

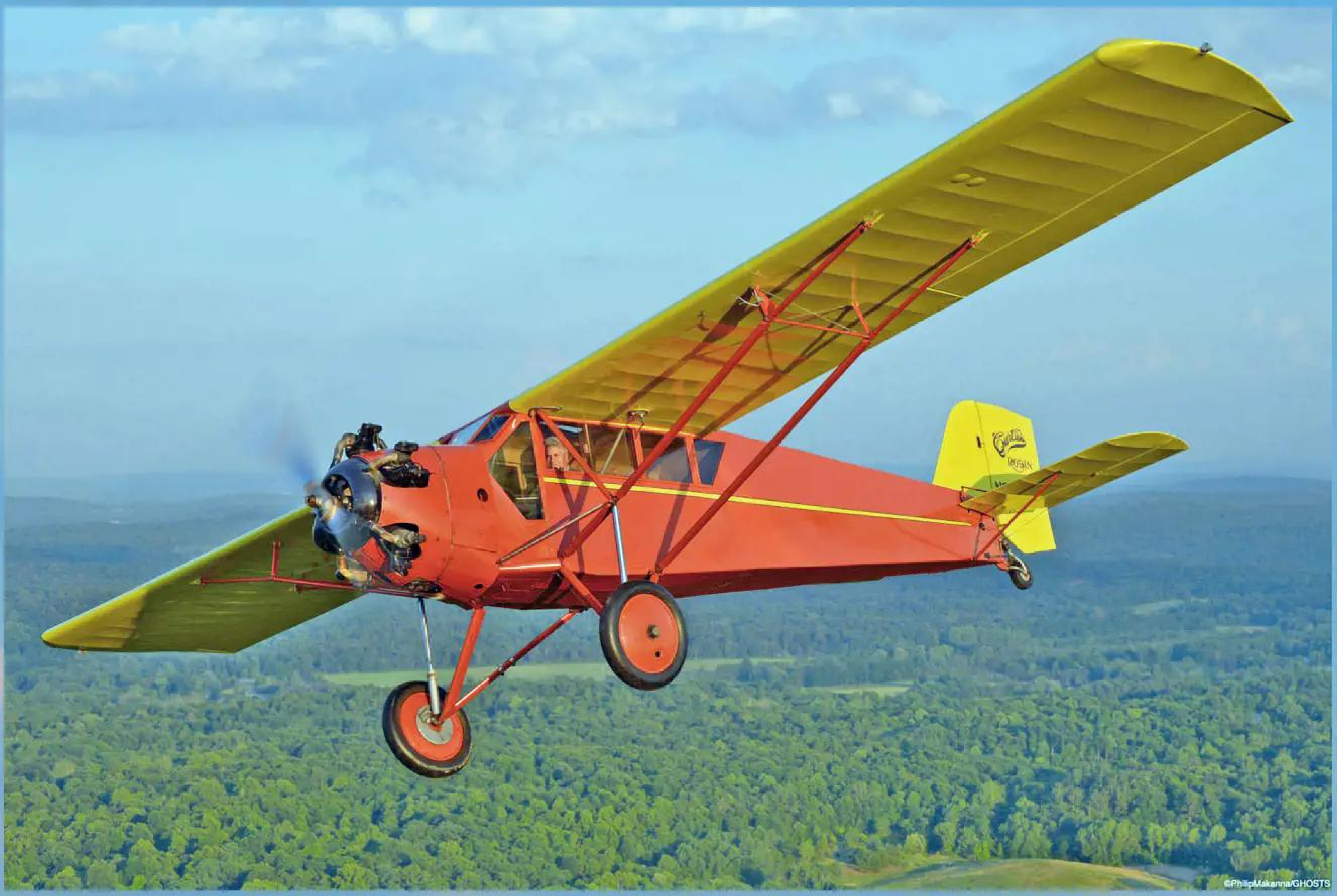
On 28 July, another accident took place at the field when CASA 1.131 *Jungmann* N1041U (ex-Spanish Air Force E.3B-469) and 1931 Great Lakes 2T-1E Sport Trainer N108CH collided while maneuvering near the airfield. The *Jungmann* received substantial damage while the Great Lakes received minor damage. There were no injuries. **AC**



Brian Coughlin flying Fokker D.VIII N94100.

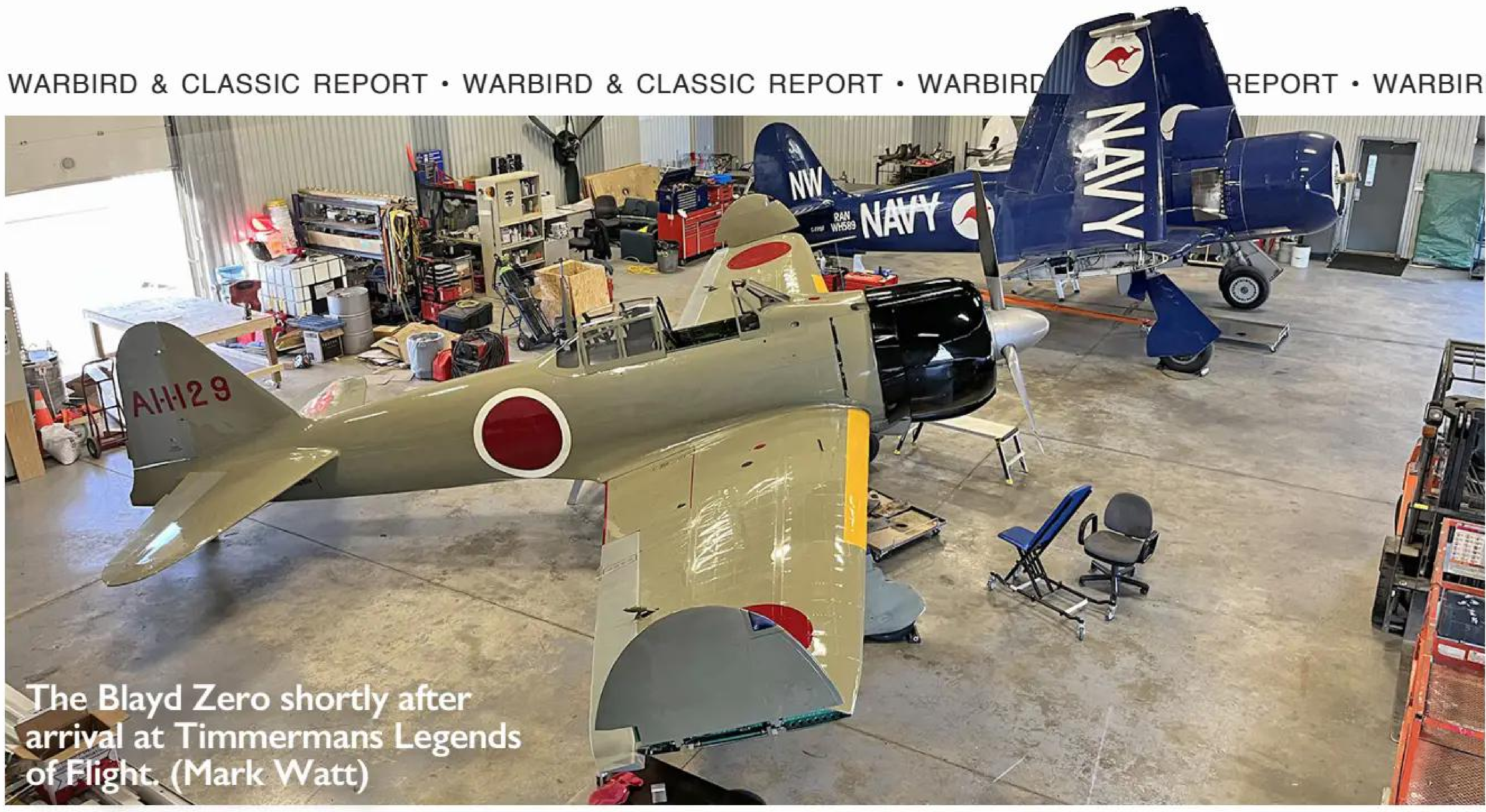


Brian inspecting the D.VIII prior to a flight. The Fokker Dr. I triplane is in the background. (ORA)



©PhilipMakanna/GHOSTS

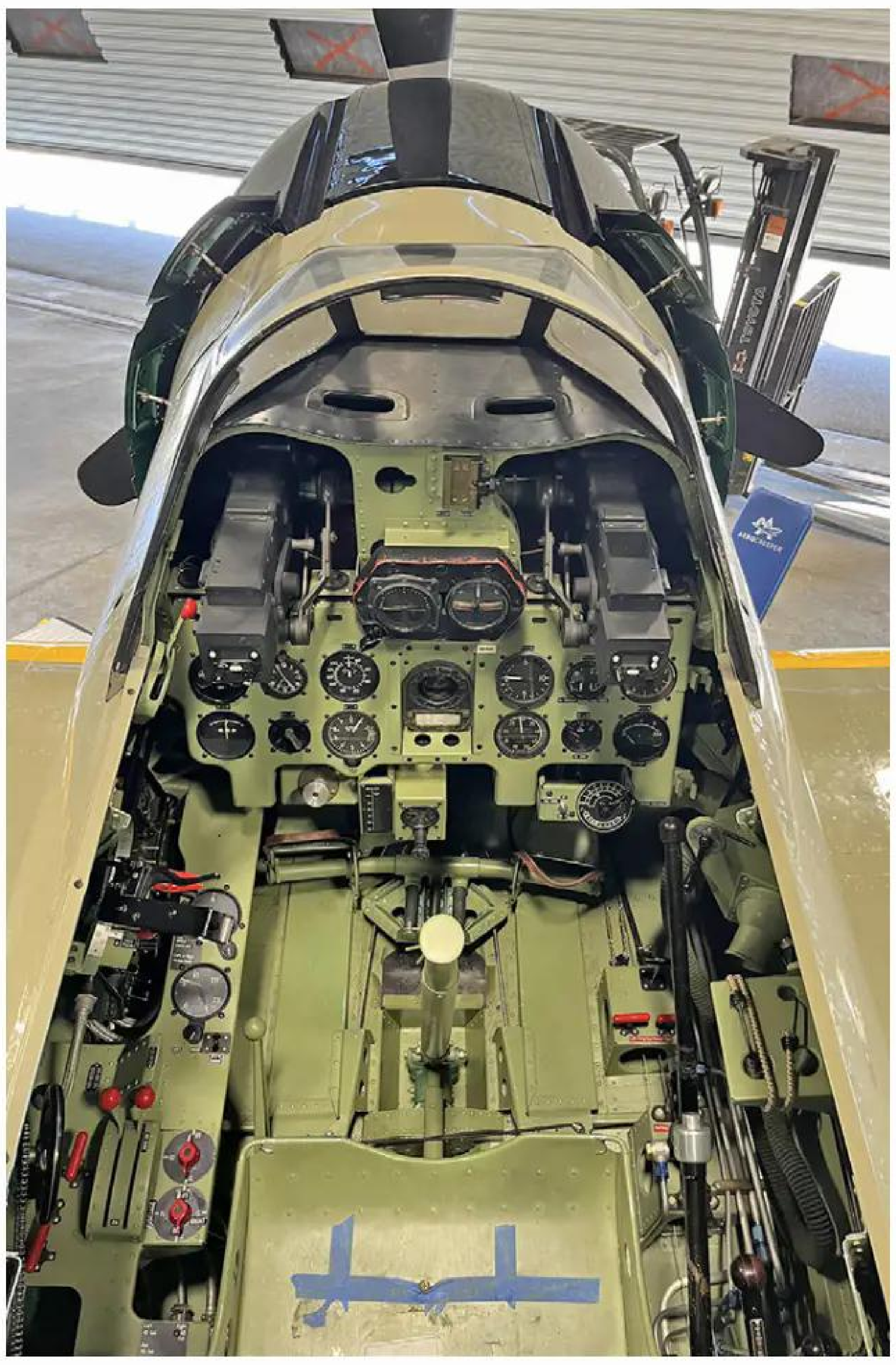
Brian piloting his restored Curtiss Robin over Old Rhinebeck.



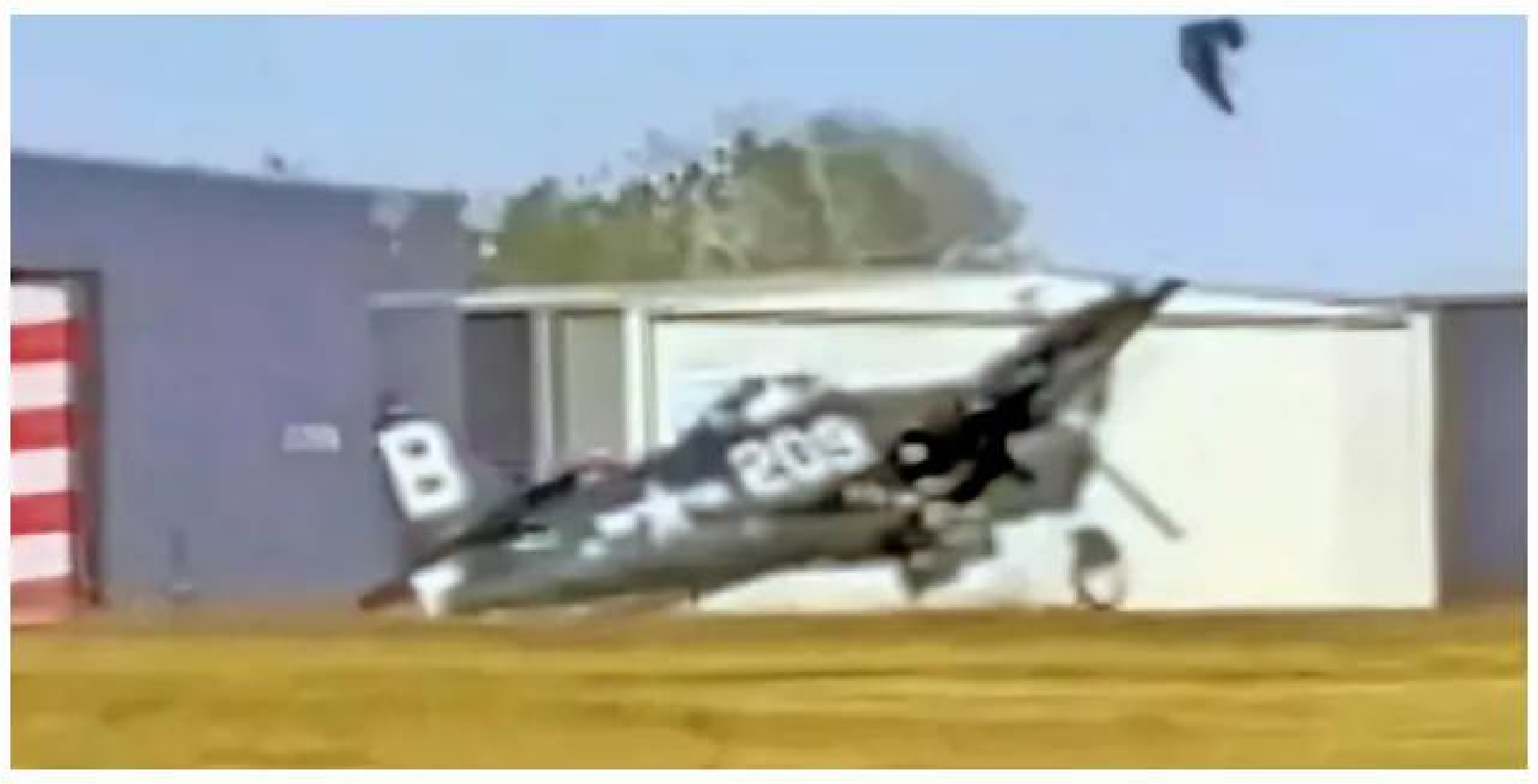
The Blayd Zero shortly after arrival at Timmermans Legends of Flight. (Mark Watt)

BLAYD ZERO ARRIVES

The Blayd Zero has arrived at the hangar of the Timmermans Legends of Flight Collection in Canada after a flight from New York. The plane had been part of a collection being built up by Ronald Lauder, who had inherited the Estee Lauder fortune (Lauder has a net worth of approximately $4.3 billion). Lauder, a well-known art collector, had created a magnificent art museum in New York City called the Neue Galerie. Several years ago, he began acquiring WWII fighter aircraft in a secretive manner. More recently, he has been putting up aircraft in his collection for sale. We do not know why they are being sold but the collection was kept under lock and key so that people could not view the planes. A few more aircraft have been listed so we imagine we will see the collection completely liquidated.



Cockpit of the Blayd Zero. (Mark Watt)



As the left gear leg collapses, the Bearcat goes off the runway.

BEARCAT ACCIDENT

On 11 October, Grumman F8F-1 Bearcat N4725Y was extensively damaged during a takeoff accident at Louise M. Thaden Field in Bentonville, Arkansas. N4725Y is the newest Bearcat restoration and had been completed to very high standards by Ezell Aviation in Breckenridge, Texas. It appears that the left main gear leg either folded or retracted early into the takeoff run, causing the plane to swerve to the left and go off the runway. The poor-quality image is from a video of the accident and shows a propeller blade airborne after departing the R-2800 engine, which was at full power. As *Air Classics* readers know, the Bearcat is a very rare survivor with about a dozen existing aircraft so it is particularly sad to see such a beautiful example so heavily-damaged. Fortunately, there were no injuries.

WHAT OUR CONTRIBUTORS ARE FLYING

This is a new occasional section of "Warbird & Classic Report" that will show what our contributors are flying. Many *Air Classics* contributors are pilots and fly a wide variety of aircraft. Chuck Gardner pilots just about every type of Warbird but his "day job" involves piloting this massive Air Tractor AT-802 Single-Engine Air Tanker (SEAT) for Boedeker Flying Service. Tanker 819 is fitted with a Pratt & Whitney PT6A-67AG turboprop of 1350-hp allowing it carry 820 gallons of retardant — much more than the Grumman TBF Avenger. "The AT-802 is a really rugged aircraft with great performance," states Chuck. "I can head to a fire at 221-mph while the low stall speed of just 91-mph is appreciated during tight maneuvering. That turbine power is really appreciated when flying from high fields on hot days. A real plus is the fact that the cockpit is air conditioned and that makes life just so much easier with the cool air and most of the smoke being filtered out. Wing span is a bit over 59-ft so compare that to the Avenger's 54-ft span. The Air Tractor's superb maneuverability allows me to get down and safely support our fire-fighters on the ground. Rapid containment is the name of the game and the AT-802 can quickly launch to the fire, drop our load, and return to refill. Flying the AT-802 is really an interesting contrast with the Warbirds I get to pilot and it keeps me grounded in two different types of high-performance aviation."

Chuck Gardner with his AT-802 SEAT.

"My dad really encouraged me in my aviation career," states Chuck. "He really enjoys reading about the different aircraft I fly in the pages of *Air Classics* as can be seen in this shot of him looking at the Yanks Kingcobra article."

Neatly packed, P-51D N51VF was photographed arriving at Sywell, England, where the plane will be assembled and test flown.

The wing for N51VF after being removed from the shipping container.

MUSTANG AT SYWELL

Courtesy Aircraft has sold P-51D Mustang N51VF to a new owner in Britain. This particular aircraft had been finely restored for owner Charles Osbourne's Blue Sky Aviation. This transaction illustrates how Warbirds have become products of the international commodity exchange. The rapidly escalating value of these aircraft means that new owners are purchasing planes, keeping them for a few years, and then selling them on at a substantial profit.

(continued on page 56)

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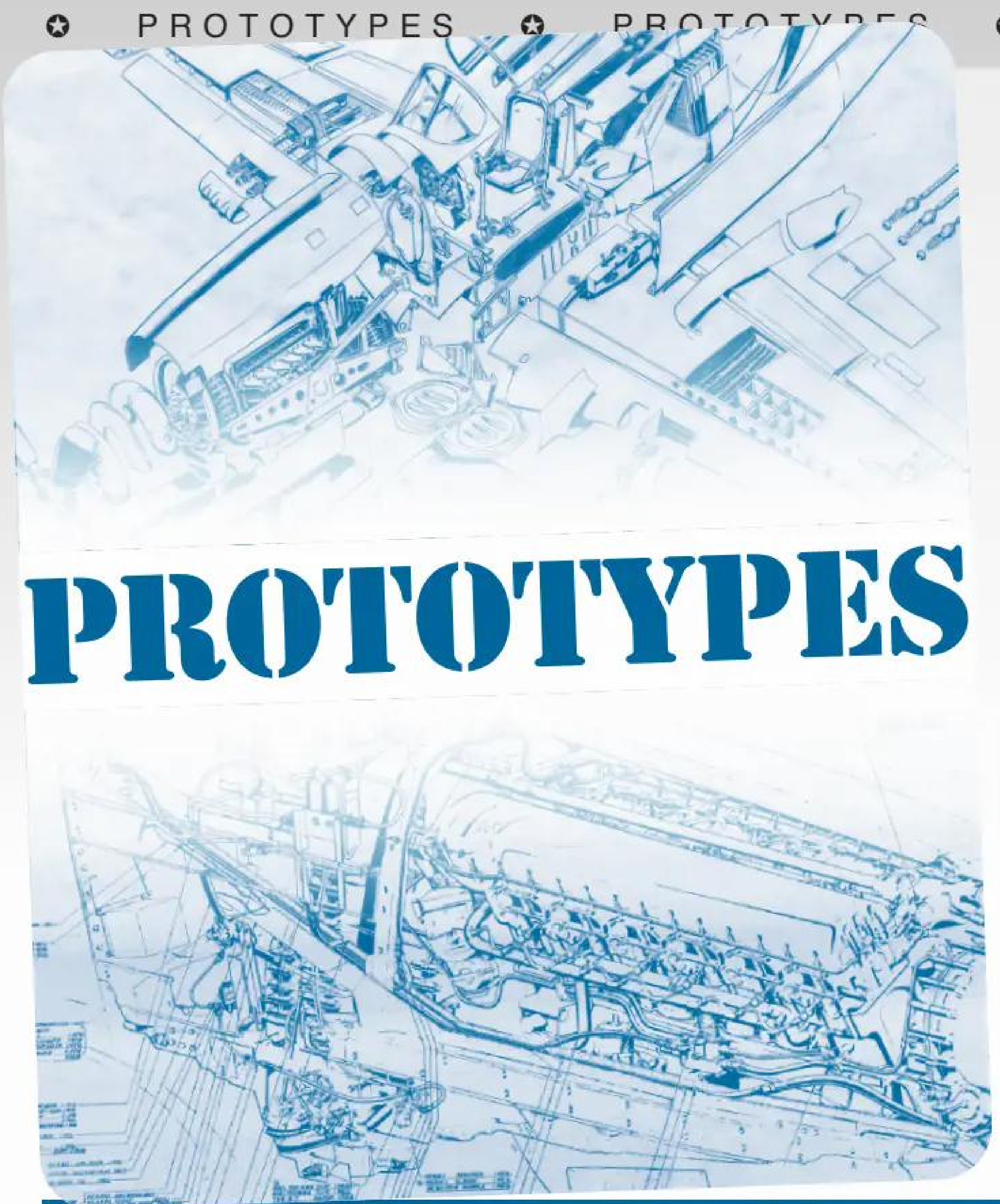
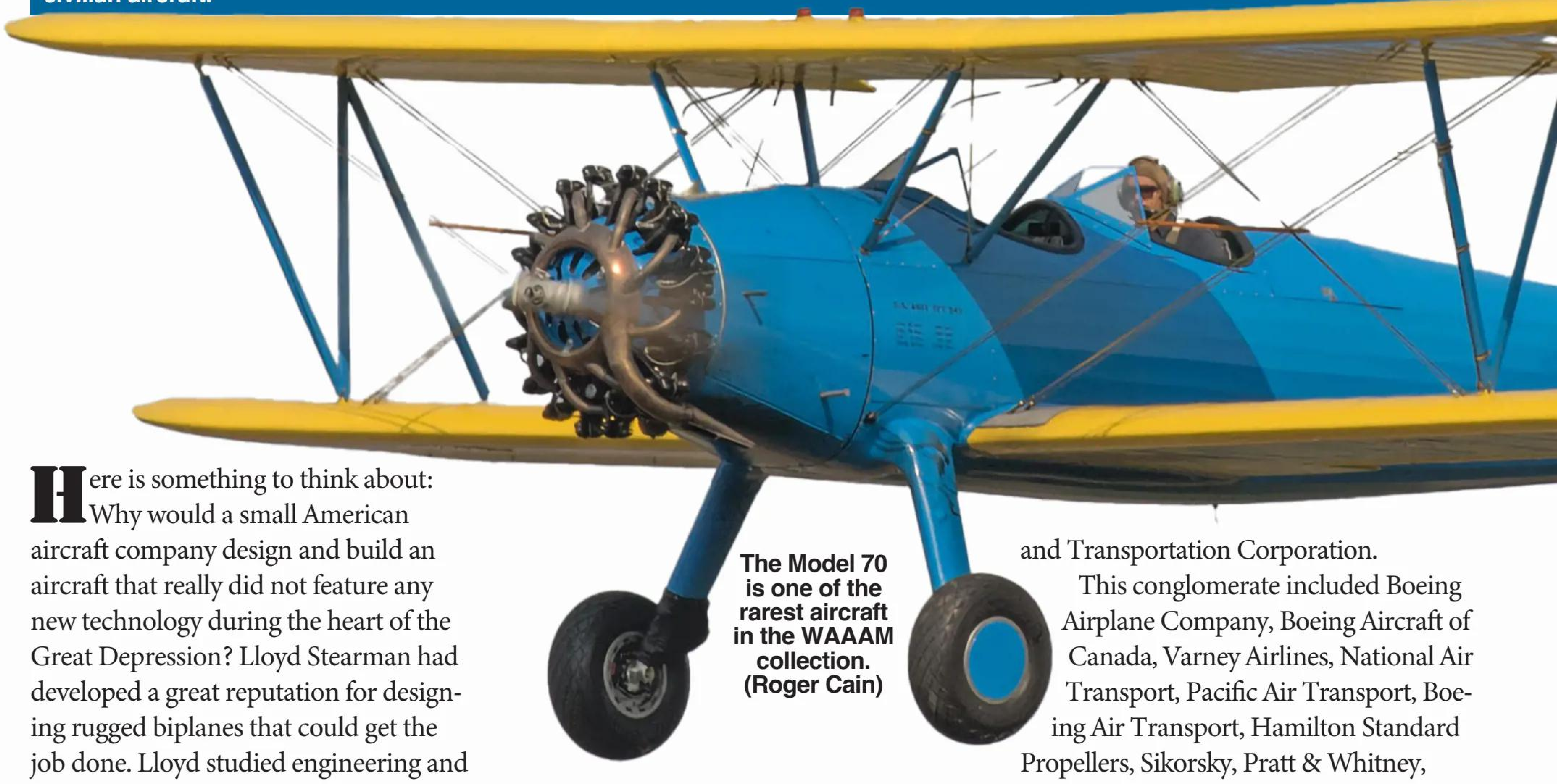


HEADING TOWARDS GREATNESS

THE BOEING STEARMAN MODEL 70 WAS PRODUCED AS ONLY A SINGLE AIRCRAFT. HOWEVER, IT WOULD PAVE THE WAY FOR ONE OF THE MOST FAMOUS AIRCRAFT EVER BUILT

BY MICHAEL O'LEARY

EDITOR'S NOTE: The January issue of *Air Classics* begins a new series with the overall title of "Prototypes." Since our Roger Cain visited the WAAAM fly-in, we thought it most appropriate that the series opens with the Stearman Model 70 — the aircraft that led directly to the Boeing Stearman Model 75, which was produced as the N2S, PT-13, PT-17, PT-18, and PT-27. Amazingly, this unique aircraft somehow survived until its remains were recovered from a crop-duster graveyard and then lovingly restored. Today, the flying Model 70 is a reminder of how American ingenuity was responsible for creating a vast fleet of military and civilian aircraft.



The Model 70 is one of the rarest aircraft in the WAAAM collection. (Roger Cain)

Here is something to think about: Why would a small American aircraft company design and build an aircraft that really did not feature any new technology during the heart of the Great Depression? Lloyd Stearman had developed a great reputation for designing rugged biplanes that could get the job done. Lloyd studied engineering and architecture at Kansas State University before America's entry into the Great War saw him enlisting in the US Navy Reserve. Expressing a strong interest in aeronautics, young Stearman was shipped off to San Diego, California, where he learned to fly Curtiss N-9 biplanes mounted on floats. The N-9 was a cumbersome and ill-performing beast and Stearman began to think about ways on how the machine could be improved.

With the end of the war, Stearman floated around in various jobs connected to aviation but in 1925 he was one of three men that formed the new Travel Air Manufacturing Company in Wichita, Kansas. The other two partners were Walter Beech and Clyde Cessna. What an incredible combination of talent! Lloyd was always a bit of a loner and he soon separated to form Stearman Aircraft at Venice Beach in sunny southern California and that is where he began designing and building aircraft that had the distinctive "Stearman" stamp. However, he soon moved back to Wichita since the city was a hot-bed of aviation activity. In 1929, Stearman merged into the massive United Aircraft and Transportation Corporation.

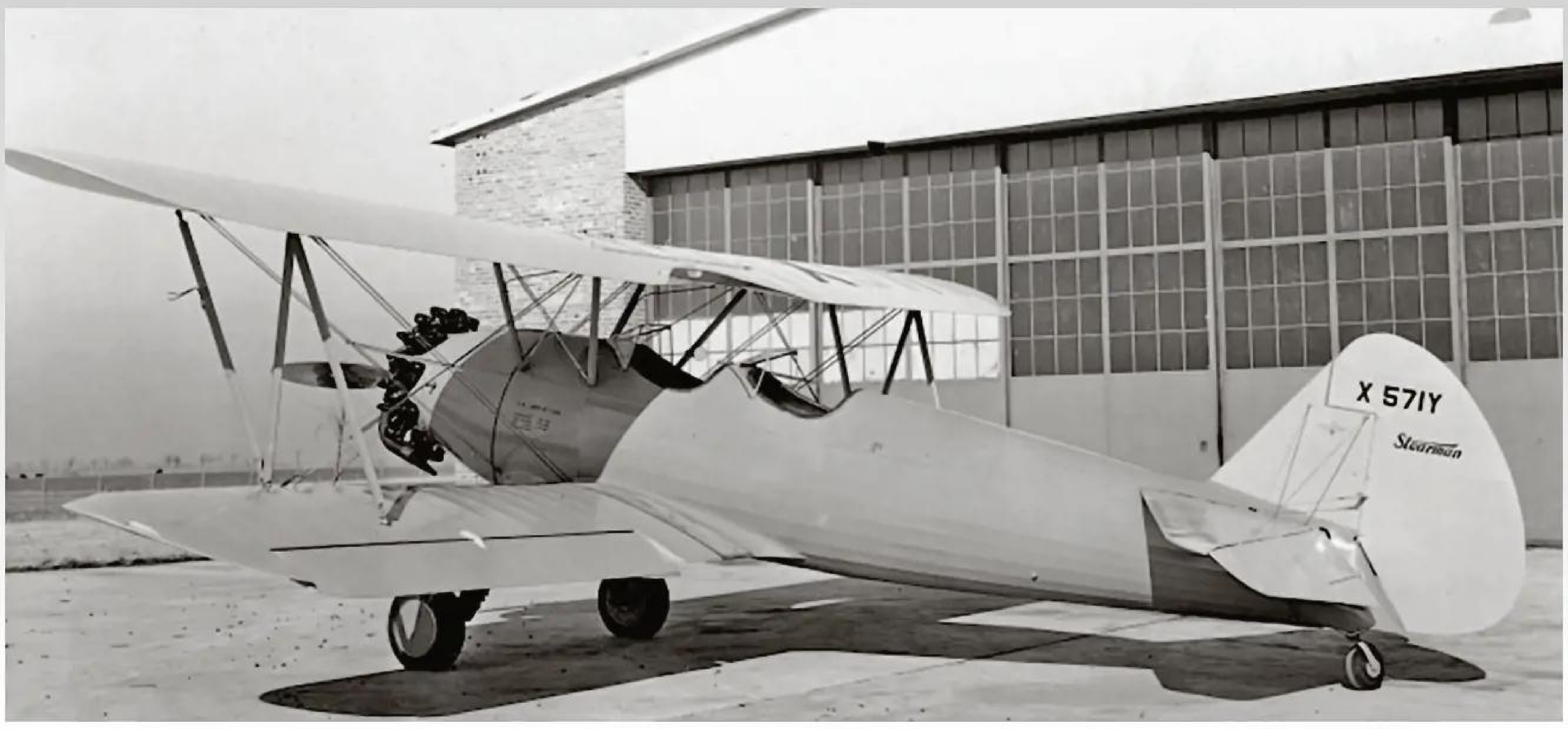
This conglomerate included Boeing Airplane Company, Boeing Aircraft of Canada, Varney Airlines, National Air Transport, Pacific Air Transport, Boeing Air Transport, Hamilton Standard Propellers, Sikorsky, Pratt & Whitney, Chance Vought, Northrop, and United Airports of Connecticut. William Boeing ran the massive operation until the US government moved in and broke it apart, stating — and probably correctly — that it was a monopoly hampering the business of rival companies.

Lloyd was president of the Stearman Division but he would resign in 1931 to move onto other aviation interests including the purchase of Lockheed Aircraft Company. In his short time with the Stearman Division, Lloyd set his mark on a series biplanes but the Great Depression was putting small aircraft companies out of business left and right so why come out with a tandem, open-cockpit biplane that had absolutely zero when it came to incorporating any form of daring new technology? The reason was pretty simple. Lloyd knew the military was going to need a new generation of primary trainers that were rugged, easy to build, and relatively cheap. The Model 70 was designed for that market.

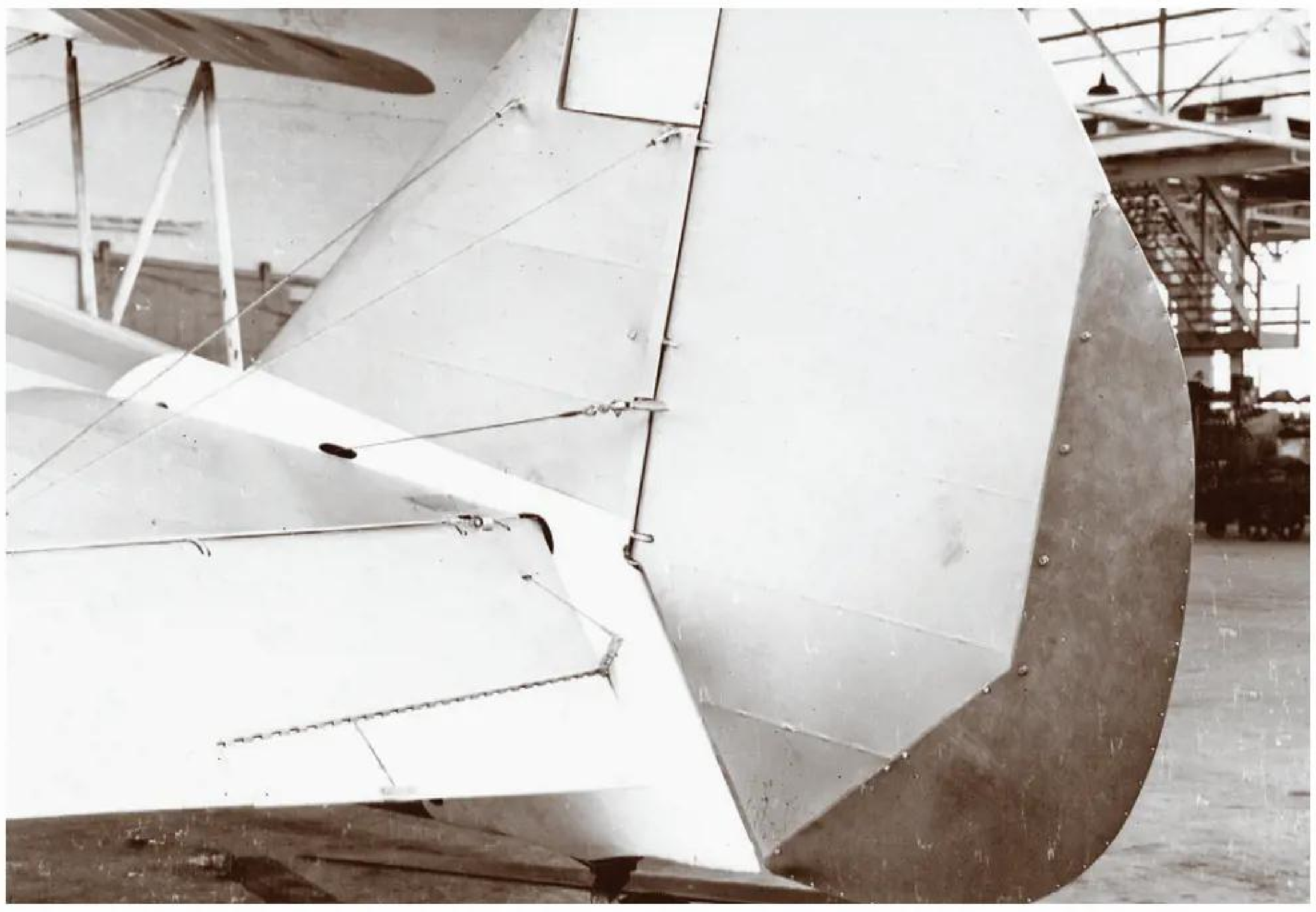
The Model 70 drew on the experience of past Stearmans (especially the Model 6 Cloudboy) and it was a completely traditional, although overstressed, aircraft that also incorporated some of the features of the Boeing Model 203, a design that had been purchased by Stearman. (The Model 203 was a low-power biplane trainer and five were initially built, all going to the Boeing School of Aeronautics at Oakland, California.) The fuselage and tail of the Model 70 were welded steel tubing covered by fabric except for the aluminum panels on the forward fuselage. The wings were built from wood and also fabric-covered. Perhaps the most innovative feature of the aircraft centered on the landing gear — gone were the usual array of drag-producing struts, replaced with a single, slim gear leg enclosed in a metal fairing.

NC571Y
Stearman

Completed in 1933 (one source says the aircraft took just 60 days from first idea to first flight), the Model 70 was painted in traditional Air Corps training colors of blue and yellow but it was strictly a civilian aircraft and carried the registration of NX571Y. After initial flights at the factory, the plane was immediately tested by the military with Navy flight trials beginning in March 1934. Next month, it was the turn of the Air Corps. For some reason, the Air Corps painted a data block in the standard position on the forward left fuselage that identified the plane as XPT-943. Interestingly, the Air Corps found that the primary trainer was *too* easy to fly and modifications were made to the top wing so that the stall would not be so gentle. Both services knew they needed a new generation trainer but money was extremely tight. However, the Navy and Boeing Stearman conspired on the Model 73, which was somewhat similar to the Model 70. Sixty-one production aircraft were ordered as the NS-1. The Air Corps held off for a bit until the Model 75 and both services would purchase over 11,000 aircraft, making the Model 75 one of the most-produced military trainers. After the war, huge numbers were sold on the civilian market and the type revolutionized agricultural aviation. By 1948, over 6000 Stearmans had received civil registrations.



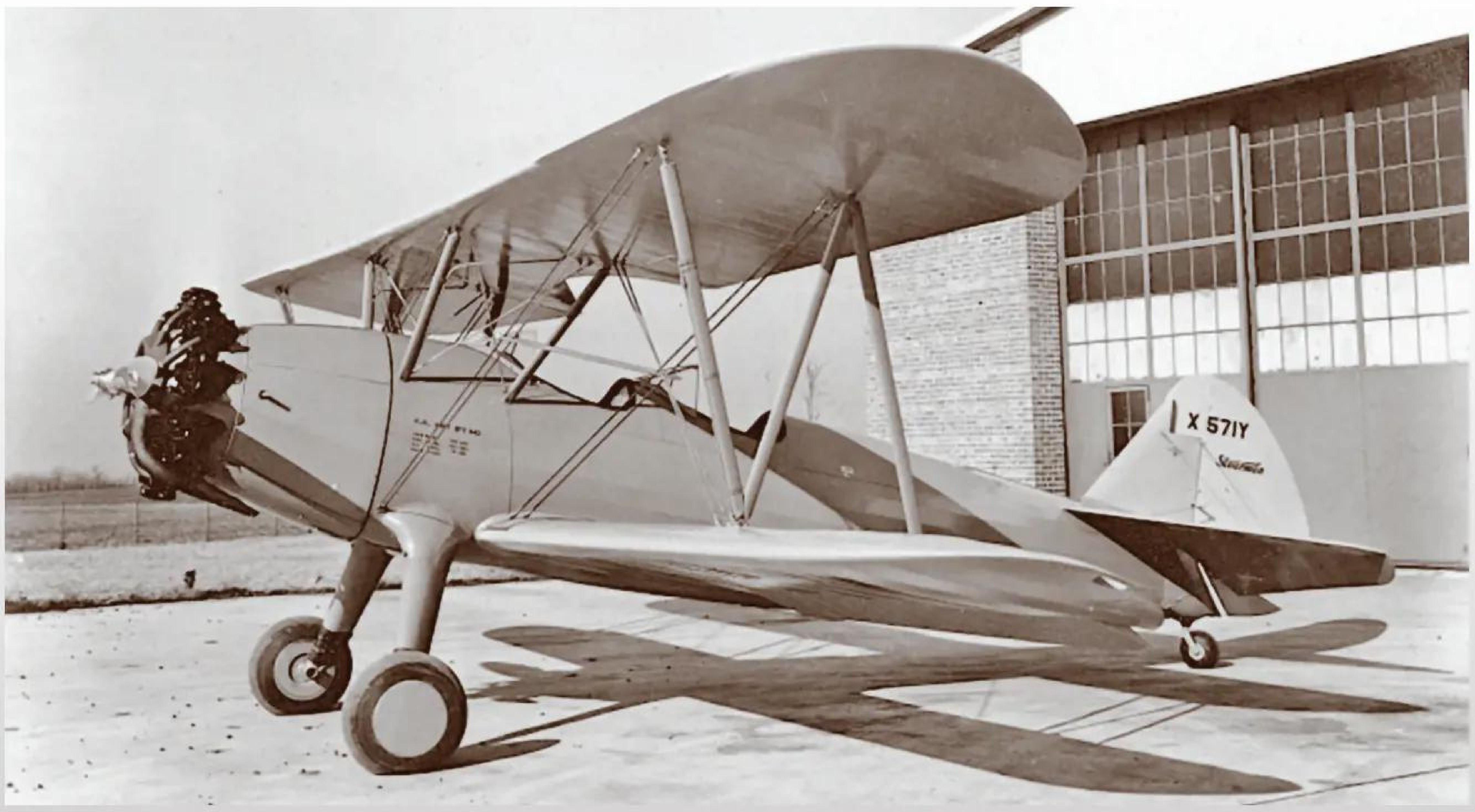
The Model 70 at the factory. The craft and the design would go through numerous modifications to become the famed Model 75.



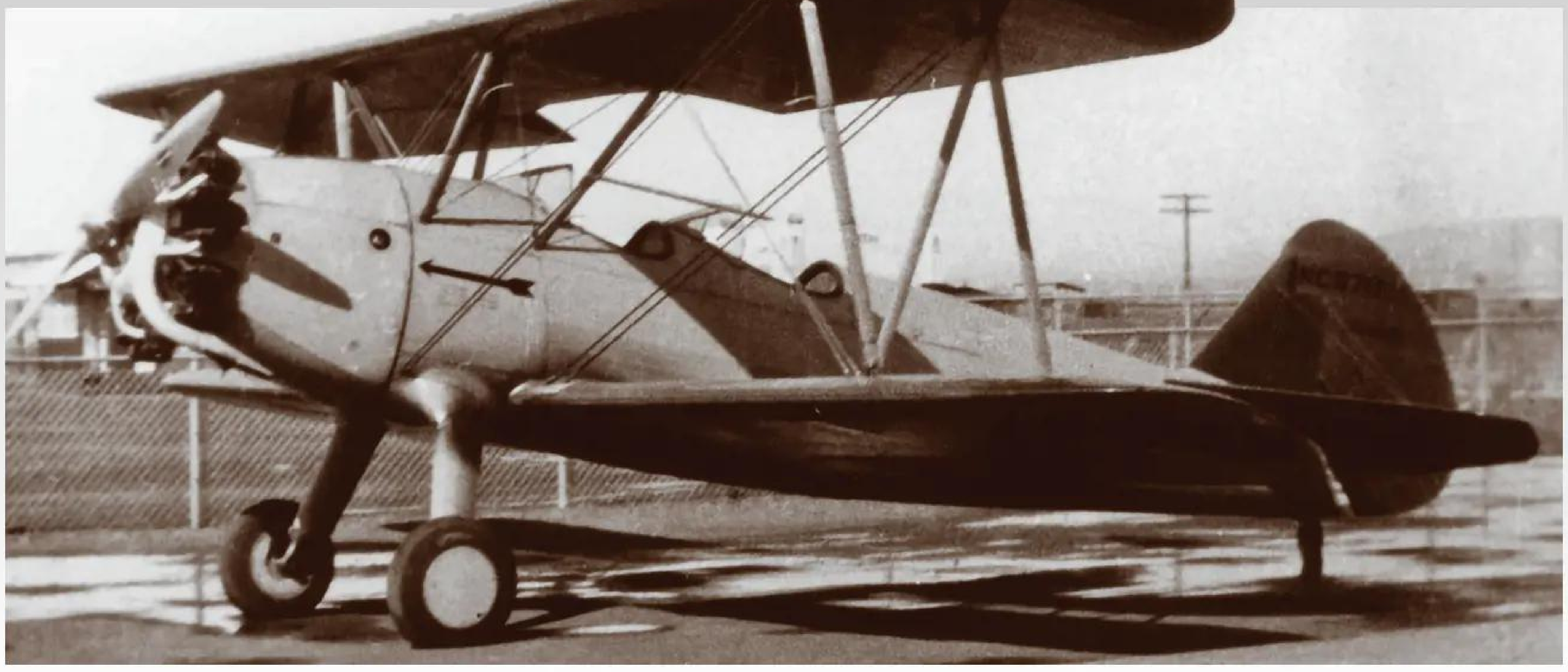
Boeing photo of the Model 70 rudder being modified.

But what of the sole Model 70? Following military testing, the aircraft received ATC Approval 2-516 on 23 September 1935 and this took it out of the Experimental and into the Standard category. By 1939, the plane had little use to the company and it was sold to a civilian owner. Its history gets a bit vague at that point but a late 1944 inspection showed that the Model 70 had amassed a very creditable 4600 flying hours.

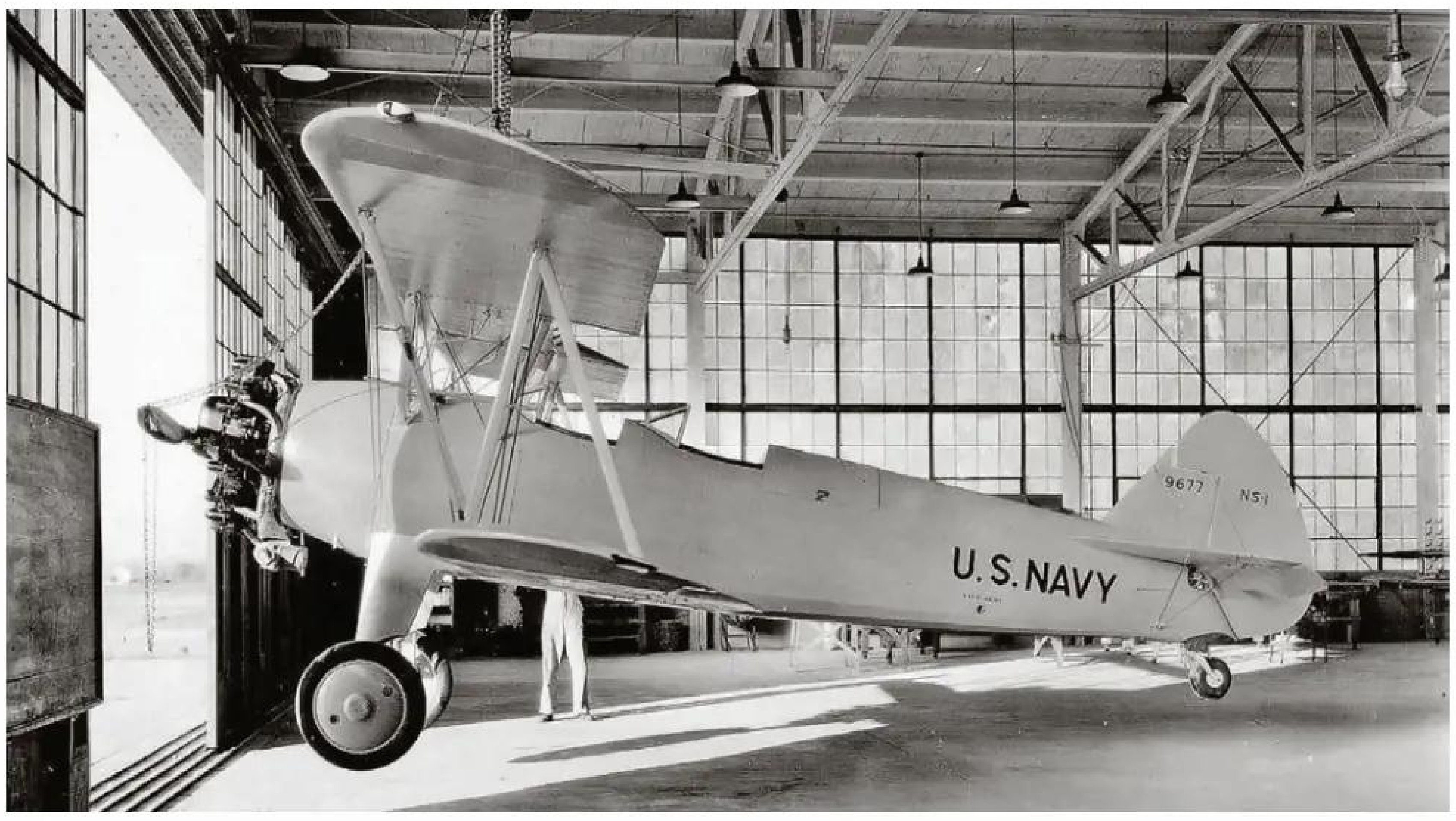
Years and years ago, there was a tough



The upper wing is completely different than the Model 75.



Model 70 undergoing testing by the Air Corps. We haven't found out what the arrow painted on the forward fuselage signified.



The Model 70 would lead directly to the limited production NS-1 for the US Navy.

old crop-duster by the name of Red Jensen. Red owned and operated an airfield that looked like it was right out of the *Twilight Zone*. Ramshackle at best, the field was packed with vintage and odd-ball aircraft including the many Travel Airs, Stearmans, and N3Ns that Red used in his business. It was said that Red quit logging his ag flight hours in 1965 after some 23,000 hours of spraying, dusting, and fire-bombing. The field was literally right across the street from what was then Sacramento's main airliner airport. Red had somehow been grandfathered into the scheme of things and his planes would come and go in conjunction with United's airliners.

For the vintage aircraft buff, it was a magical place. Parked in the weeds were hulks of Vultee Vibrators, abandoned TBM Avengers, and all sorts of other great stuff. When Red passed, all the contents of the airfield were auctioned off during 1980. Most everything went at give-away prices. Tom Murphy and Terry Brandt visited the auction in search of a Stearman Model 75 project to restore. They were taken aback by just how disorganized things were. Complete aircraft were sold as such but then there were stacks of wings, tail surfaces, and other parts that were sold as lots. No effort had been made to match anything up.

Murphy purchased a stack of tail surfaces that came out of a dusty shed reasoning he could pick what he needed for a Model 75 project and then sell the rest later. Looking over his purchase, he saw that one of the rudders had the classic Stearman shape but the rudder bell crank was in a completely different location than the Model 75. Also, the rudder was not built like a standard Stearman rudder. He then pulled out his reference book on Stearmans and found that an exact same rudder had been installed on the one-and-only Model 70. Built in 1933 with the registration NX571Y, this aircraft would serve, with a number of differences, as the prototype for the Model 75.

Unfortunately, the fuselage and wings had been sold. The buyer thought they were a Model 75 and the pair talked to the new owner and offered him what he paid for the project ($1000). He refused. He wanted to restore his own Model 75 but the pair tried to explain this was something different. They raised the offer. He still refused. They tripled the offer, and it was still a negative. However, the fellow had also purchased one of Red's Avengers and all the control surfaces had rotten fabric. A deal was struck — they would redo the fabric and give him $3000 for the Model 70. The pair were elated. They walked around and talked to other folks that had purchased Stearman "packages" and found even more Model 70 parts — the faded blue paint identifying them.

Boeing provided a set of photos that were a big help for the restoration. Time moved ahead and in 1993, Murphy saw an ad for a complete firewall forward Lycoming 215-hp radial for sale in Nevada. Now, Murphy knew that a couple other planes used the engine and he thought that the asking price of $1950 was a misprint. Calling up the owner, he found the price was correct and engine was complete with magnetos, carburetor, air intake, oil tank, and engine mount. As the owner described the engine, Murphy knew it had to be from the Model 70. Plus, Red had operated a base in Nevada.

Buying the engine sight unseen, he went to Nevada to pick it up and found the engine as advertised but it also had some of the original sheet metal panels attached — in the same faded blue paint. Later, checking FAA records, he found that the serial number of the engine was the same installed on the Model 70.

Completely enthused, the men dug into the project and restored the aircraft that is now one of the stars of the WAAAM collection. The plane made its first post-restoration flight on 31 May 2016. It would sort of be like finding the hulk of the North American NA-73X — the prototype that would become the Mustang. The Model 70 looks somewhat like a Kaydet, but it isn't and that is what makes the whole world of vintage aviation so fascinating. **AC**

SPECIFICATIONS BOEING STEARMAN MODEL 70

Span	32-ft 2-in top wing; 31-ft 2-in bottom wing
Length	24-ft 10-in
Height	9-ft 4-in
Empty Weight	1997-lbs
Gross Weight	2686-lbs
Cruise Speed	103-mph
Max Speed	124-mph
Ceiling	13,200-ft
Climb	825-fpm (initial)
Powerplant	Lycoming R-680/215-hp

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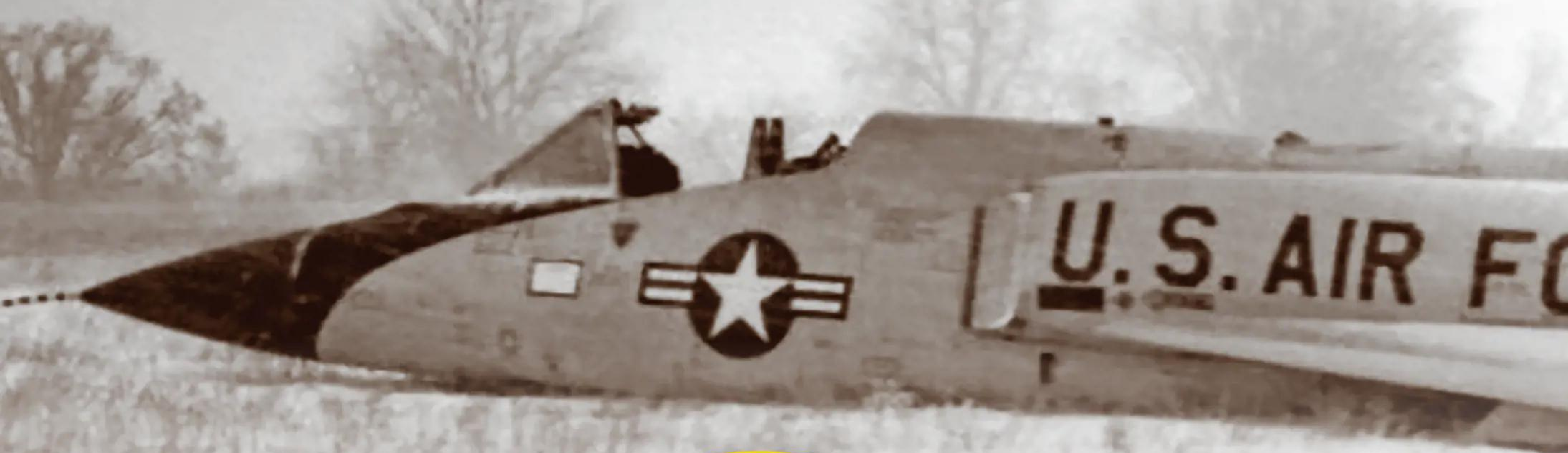
“GARY, YOU BETTER GET BACK IN THAT THING!”

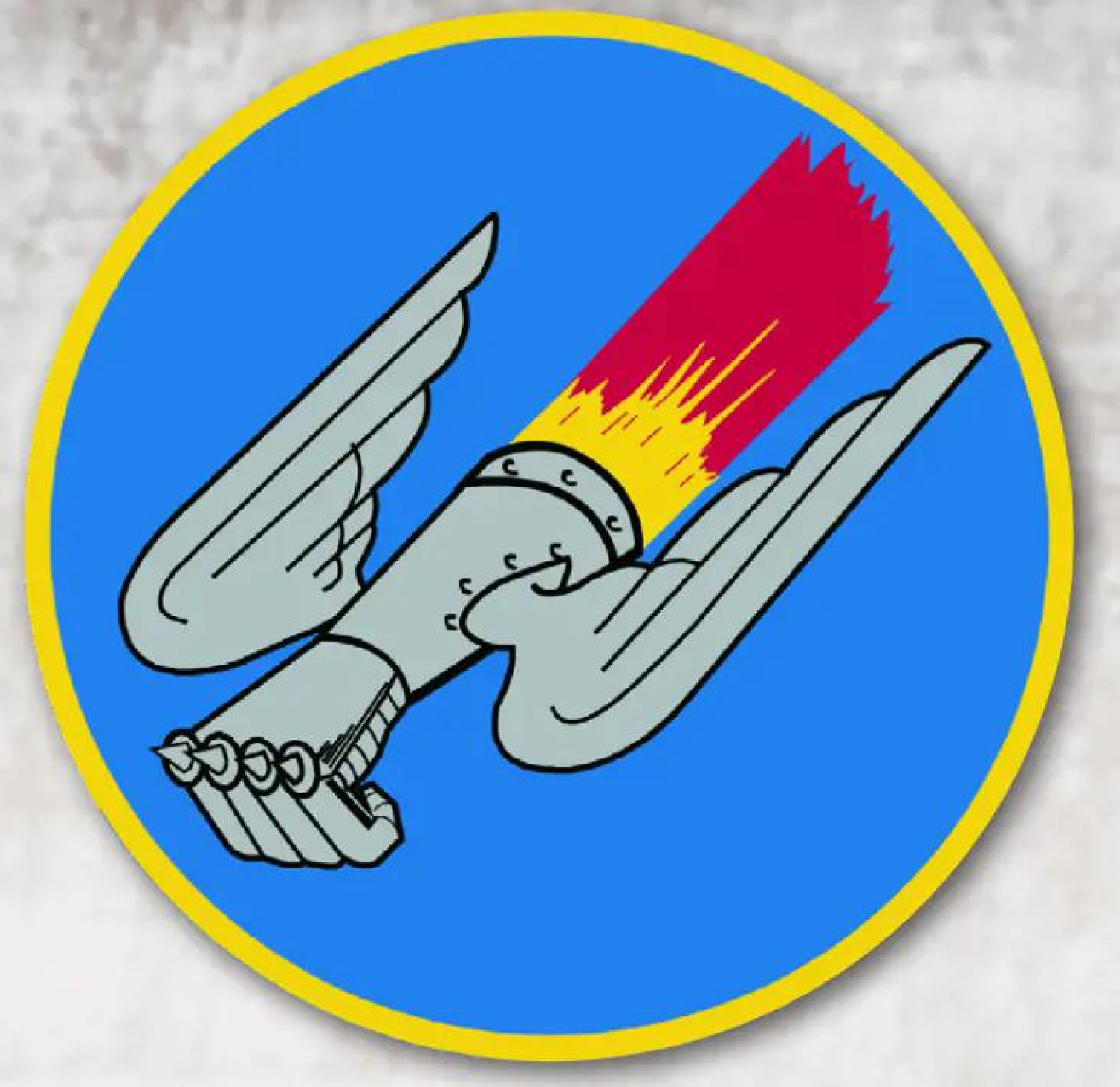
SOME 55 YEARS AFTER IT HAPPENED, THE FACT THAT A PILOTLESS CONVAIR F-106 INTERCEPTOR MANAGED TO LAND ITSELF IS AN EVENT THAT STILL PROMPTS DISCUSSION

BY HOWARD CARTER



The unusual sight of Convair F-106A-100-CO USAF 58-0787 in a frozen wheatfield near Big Sandy, Utah. As can be seen, damage to the sophisticated interceptor was relatively light because of the smooth touchdown at a relatively slow speed.

On 2 February 1970, 1st Lt. Gary Foust was undertaking a flight in F-106A-100-CO USAF 58-0787, the last of the great American interceptor aircraft — the mighty Convair Delta Dart. The F-106 was a development of the earlier F-102 Delta Dagger and was part of a 1954 program to create what the USAF viewed as the “ultimate interceptor” — a massively high-performance aircraft with only one mission in its life and that mission was to kill Soviet long-range bombers.

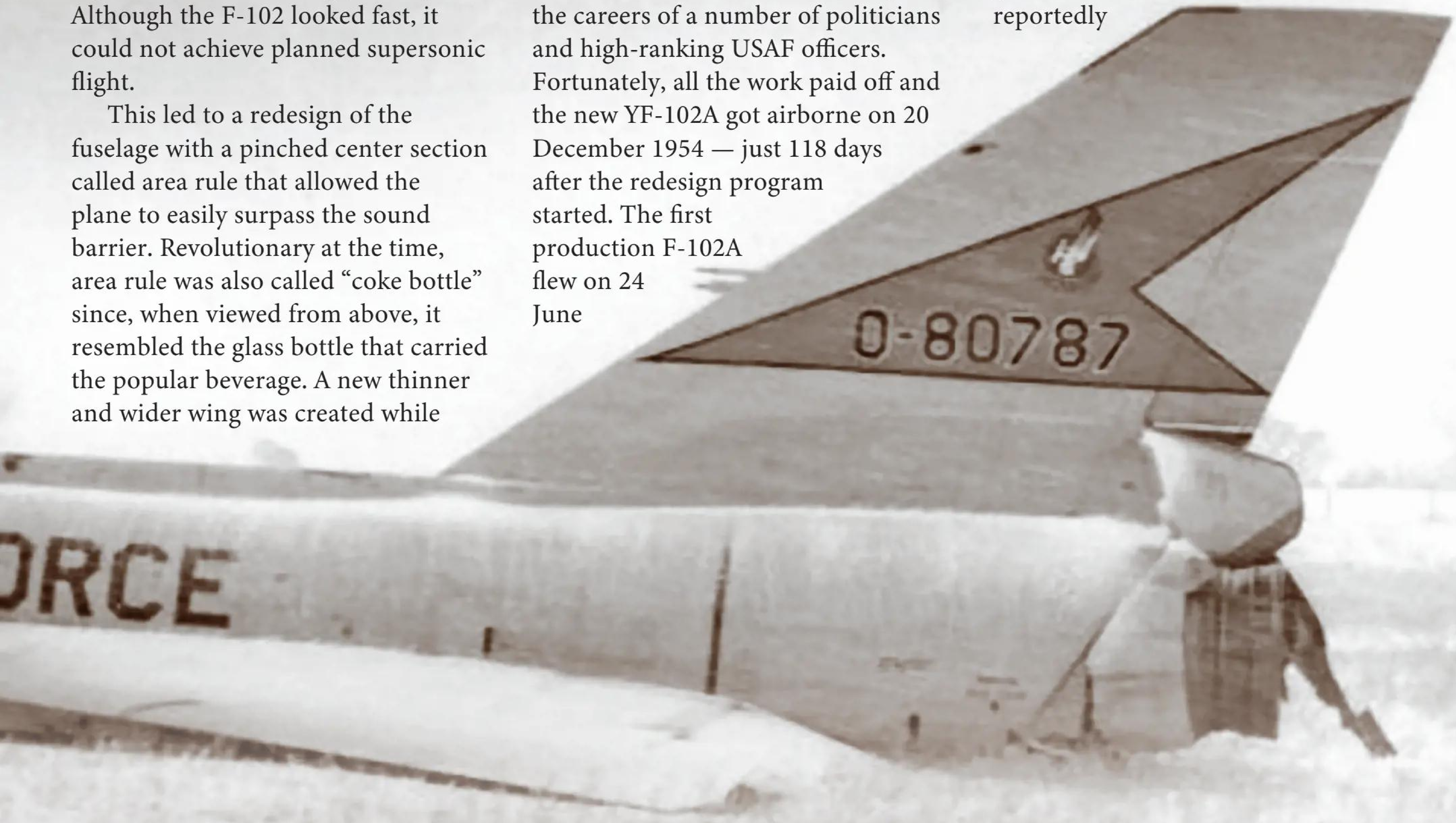


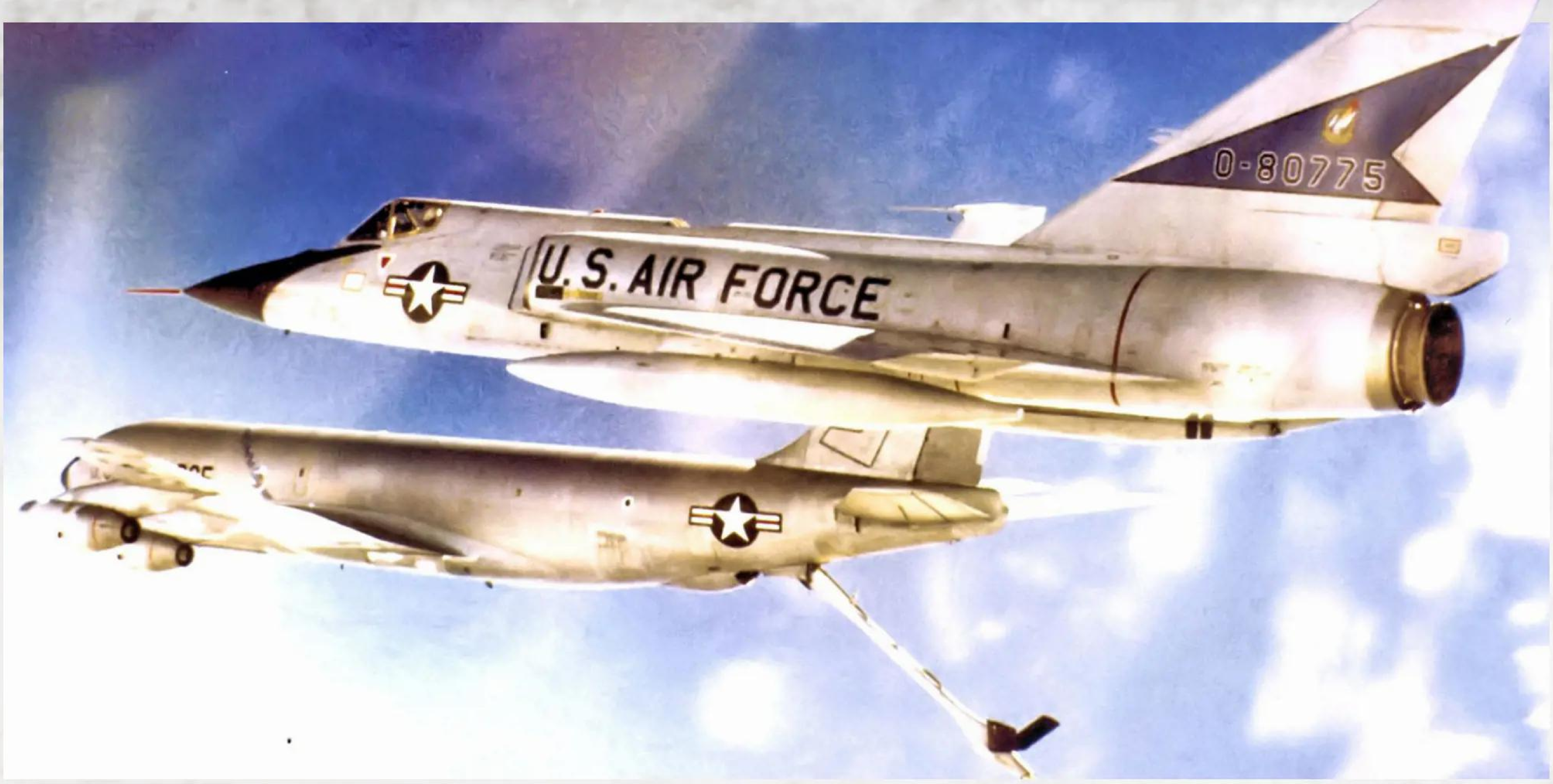
Insignia of the 71st Fighter Interceptor Squadron.

Originally designated as the F-102B, the new warplane had some major differences including installation of the Pratt & Whitney J75 turbojet engine that was fed by heavily redesigned air inlets. Along with a variable-geometry inlet duct to suit a wide range of supersonic speeds, application of area rule to the fuselage to make breaking the sound barrier an easy task was incorporated along with the latest avionics, and a general overall increase in size, made the F-102B was pretty much a completely different aircraft when compared to its earlier namesake. Designed without a gun nor any sort of provision for carrying bombs, the new interceptor would be armed with AIM-4 Falcon air-to-air missiles carried within an internal weapons bay. This clean configuration was beneficial to long-distance supersonic cruising as the exterior would not be marred by drag-inducing weapons pylons.

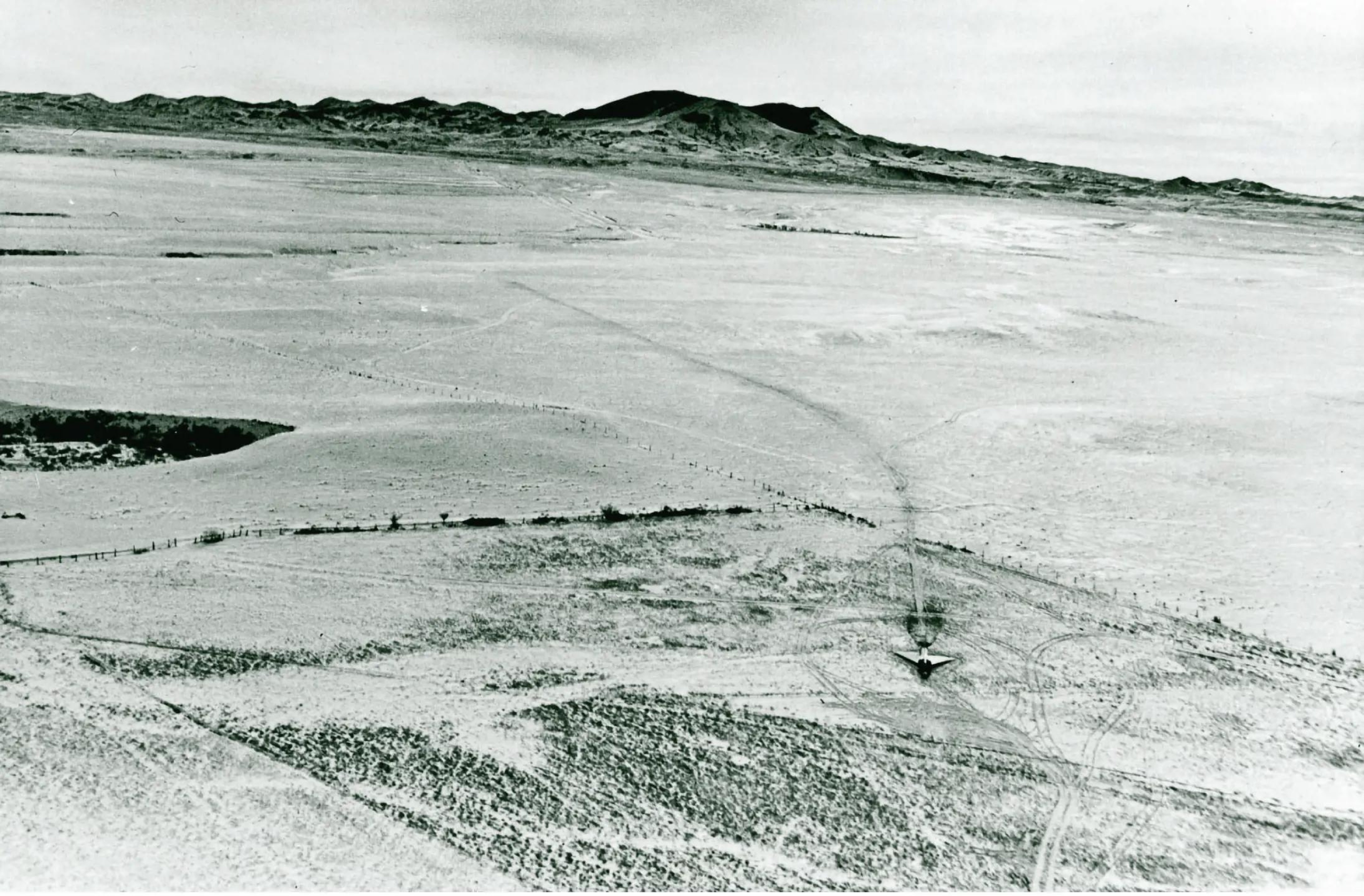
However, the Convair F-102A was not turning out to be the warplane the USAF wanted since early variants had very poor performance — limited to lower altitudes and subsonic speeds. Since the USAF was placing a great deal of hope on the F-102 and its ability to counter the Soviet bomber threat, Convair and the USAF went into overdrive into an attempt to save the plane. The first YF-102 got airborne on 23 October 1953 but was destroyed in a crash just nine days later. A second YF-102 was flying three months after the accident but initial flight test data was disappointing. Although the F-102 looked fast, it could not achieve planned supersonic flight.

This led to a redesign of the fuselage with a pinched center section called area rule that allowed the plane to easily surpass the sound barrier. Revolutionary at the time, area rule was also called “coke bottle” since, when viewed from above, it resembled the glass bottle that carried the popular beverage. A new thinner and wider wing was created while the Westinghouse J40 turbojet was dumped. This engine was installed in prototypes and pre-production aircraft when there were delays with the Curtiss-Wright J67 and the MA-1 Fire Control System. Failure of the J40 led to the installation of the P&W J57 turbojet with afterburner. This major design would be the only thing that would save the aircraft along with the careers of a number of politicians and high-ranking USAF officers. Fortunately, all the work paid off and the new YF-102A got airborne on 20 December 1954 — just 118 days after the redesign program started. The first production F-102A flew on 24 June 1955 and massive contracts were issued for the type, which could now attain over Mach 1 at the required altitudes. Throughout its life, the F-102A was subjected to some major airframe and avionics upgrades and this allowed it to stay in service longer than originally planned. However, there was a need for greater performance since the Soviets were reportedly





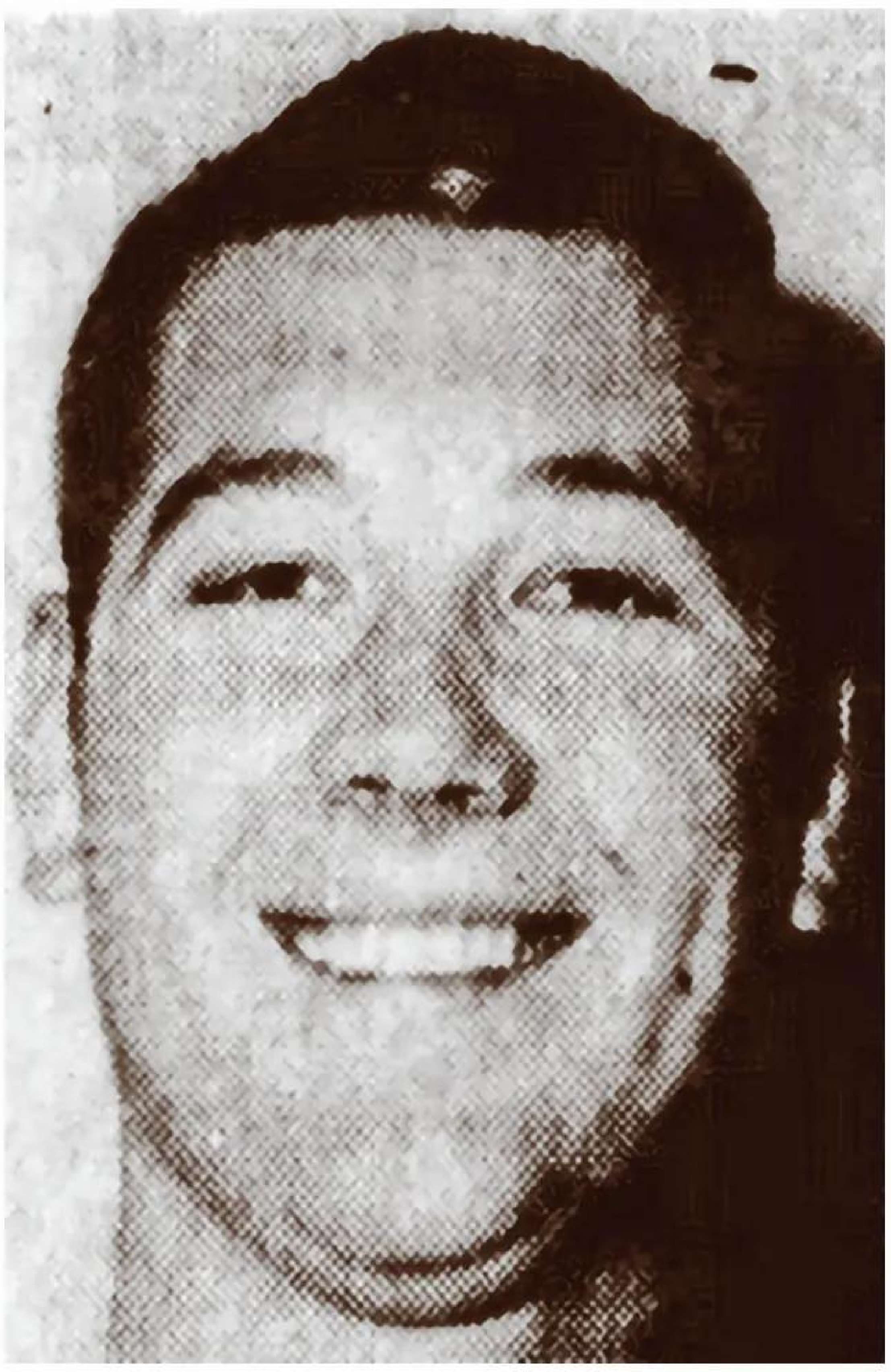
Reflections bouncing off the canopy of an accompanying F-106B two-seater, F-106A 58-0775 of the 71st FIS was photographed as it waited its turn to top off fuel tanks from a KC-135.



An approaching rescue helicopter crewman took this rather amazing photograph of 58-078 "parked" in the Montana wheatfield. The interceptor gently touched down on the frozen field and traveled straight for some length of time before beginning a gradual right slide that took the F-106A through a fence line that did damage to its belly. Residual thrust from the idling engine gave the plane a modicum of forward speed. Once it completely stopped, the F-106A ran for one hour and 45 minutes before reaching fuel exhaustion.

adding a new generation of high-performance bombers and this increased threat led to the F-106.

The "F-102B" would be fitted with a Wright J67 (Bristol Olympus built under license and replacing the F-102A's J57) but there were delays with this powerplant and with the complex fire control system (FCS). On 17 June 1956, the design was redesigned F-106A rather than F-102B since it was now pretty much a completely different aircraft. The first aerodynamic testbed F-106 flew on 26 December 1956 but there were again problems — both engine and avionics had reliability issues and acceleration and maximum speed were below Convair's carefully calculated estimates. Various modifications were put into place and everything possible was done to hasten development and production since the Soviet threat was, according to data gathered by the CIA, increasing.



First Lieutenant Gary Foust was the only lieutenant in the squadron.

To get more aircraft to the "front lines," the USAF undertook conditional acceptance of several F-106s being used by Convair for developmental work. By mid-1957, funding for 120 F-106As had been allocated but the USAF ultimately ordered just 350 F-106s and this was substantially less than the fleet of 1000 interceptors that had been planned. During October 1959, deliveries of the F-106A and two-seat F-106B combat-capable trainer commenced to the 15 fighter-interceptor squadrons that would operate the type.

The F-106 immediately began setting records and Maj. Joe Rogers took an F-106A to 1525.96-mph at 40,500-ft on 15 December 1959. Shortly after, Charles Myers flew the same aircraft to 1544-mph. The F-106A was fitted with the Hughes MA-1 integrated fire-control system that could be linked directly to the Semi-Automatic Ground Environment (SAGE) network for ground control interception (CGI) missions that allowed the plane to be directed by controllers to the target. However, the MA-1 was very troublesome and over 60 upgrades were made to the system during its time in service.

Entering into operational use, there were numerous technical problems but

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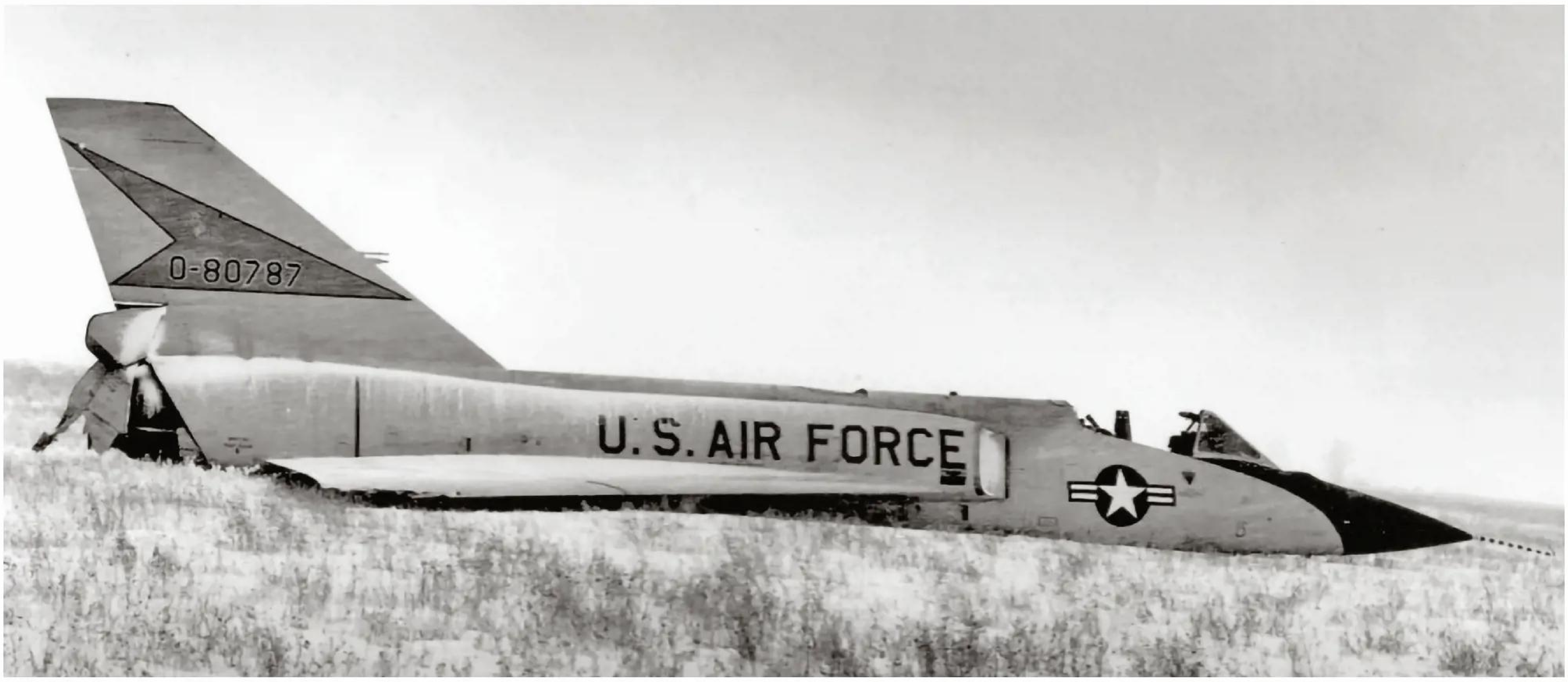
F-106A firing a nuclear-tipped Genie missile. The weapon would not have only brought down Soviet bomber formations, but would have caused harm to those below its explosion.

for pilots one of the most troubling was the ejection seat. Early F-106s had a variant of the seat that was installed in the F-102A. This was the Weber interim seat — a catapult seat that used an explosive charge to clear it of the aircraft. This was not a zero-zero seat and was completely inadequate for ejections at supersonic speeds as well as ground-level ejections or ejections at speeds below 120 knots and 2000 feet.

The second seat that replaced the Weber interim seat was the Convair/ICESC (Industry Crew Escape System Committee) Supersonic Rotational B-Seat, called the supersonic "bobsled" and hence the B designation. This seat was designed with supersonic ejection as its primary motive. F-106 pilots viewed supersonic escape as the most important criteria but seat designers viewed an ejection at low altitude and slow speed as the most likely scenario.

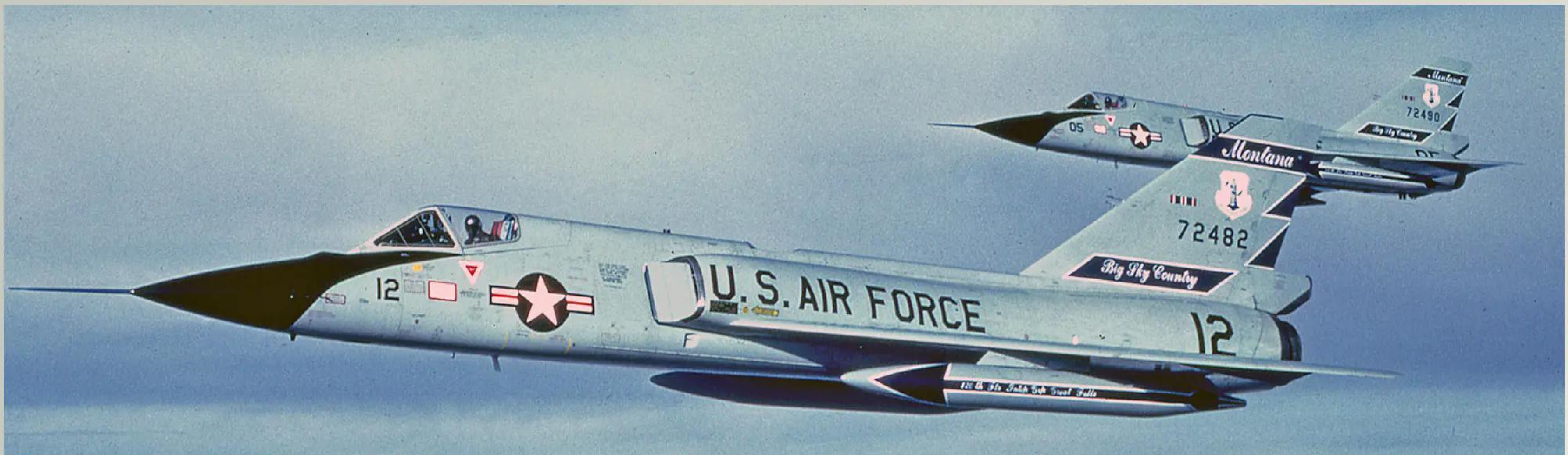
The ejection sequence with the



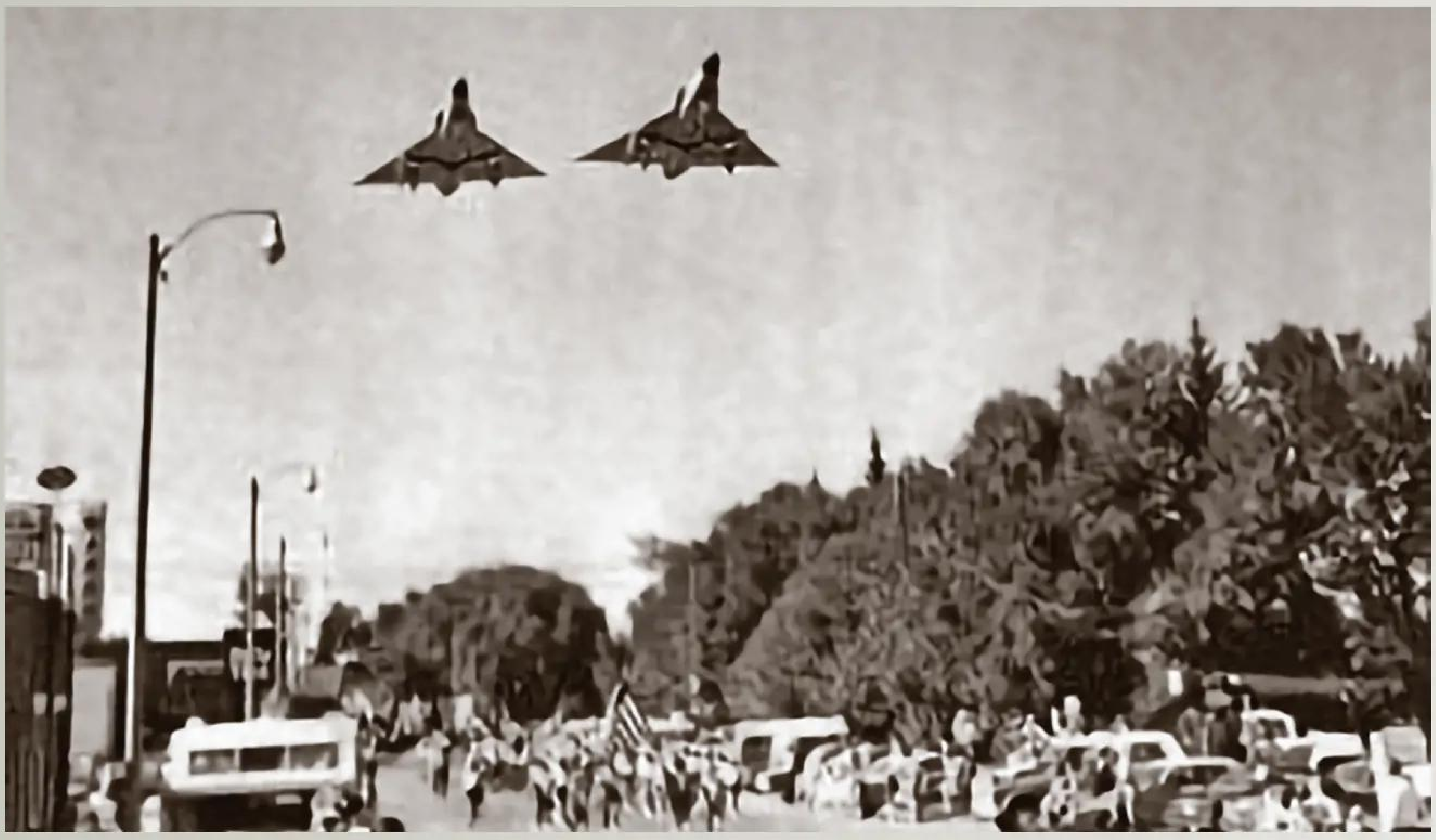
Right-side view of 58-0787 in the barren Montana field. The aircraft arrived surprisingly intact but note the slightly bent pitot tube.

THE DAY THE SIX CAME TO TOWN

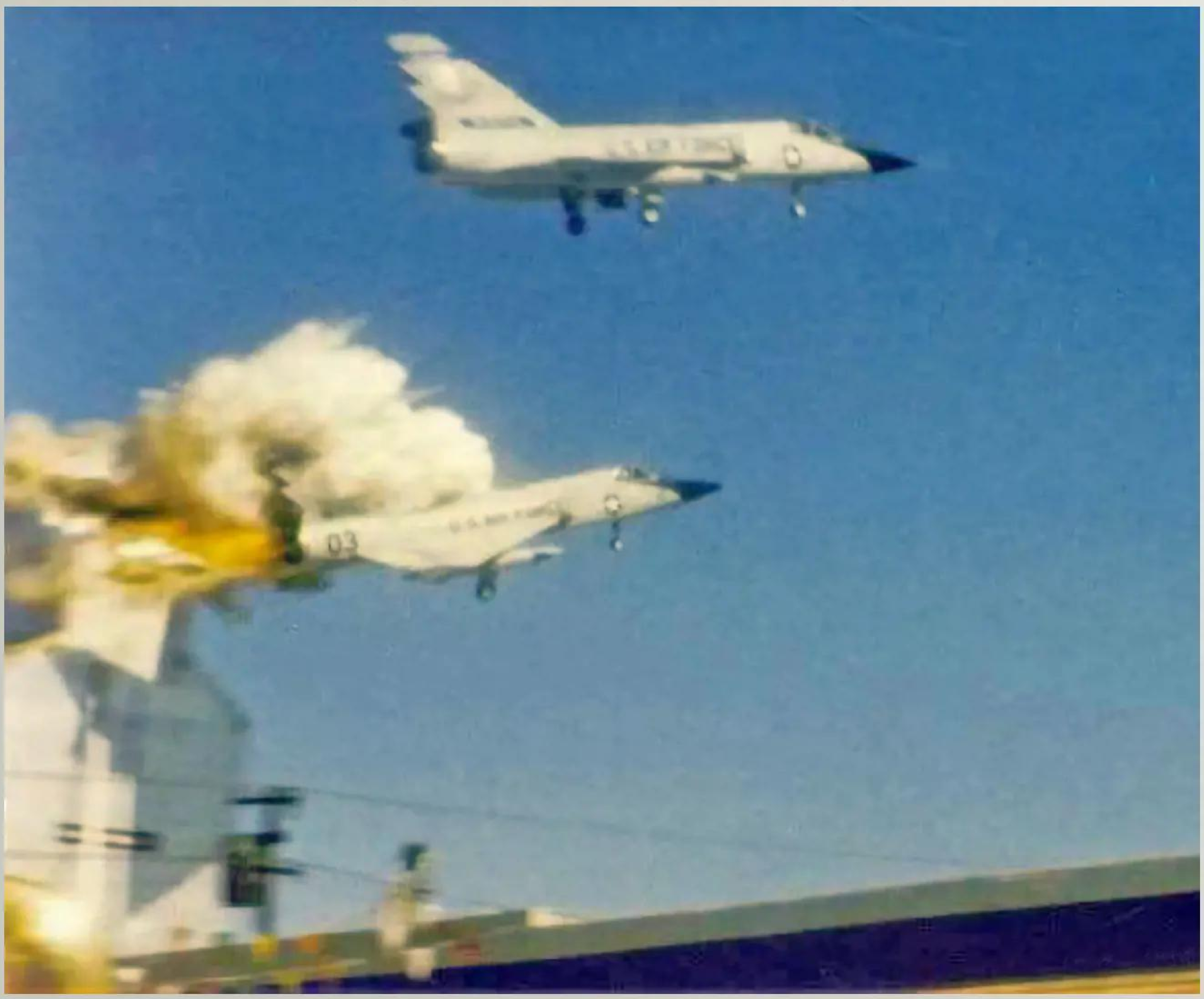
LABOR DAY FLY-PAST RESULTED IN THE PARTIAL DESTRUCTION OF A SMALL MONTANA TOWN



For many years, the Sixes of the Montana ANG were a familiar sight to residents and a source of pride since they knew Montana was at the "pointed end" of stopping Soviet aggression.



The Sixes, noses held high, proceed down the main thoroughfare of Dillon.



This dramatic snapshot captures the moment of impact. Due to the fact the ejection seats were not that effective, there was no chance the pilot would survive the collision.

During the late 1970s, the city of Dillon, Montana, was a sleepy little town with a population of around 4000. Founded in 1880 by Union Pacific Railroad President Sydney Dillon, the town was created because it was one of the closest rail locations to the silver and gold mines that were springing up in the mountainous area and pushing out the previous fur trappers. The railroad was convenient for bringing supplies in and out of the area while the mining business fluctuated with numerous ups and downs. The last real gold boom in the area started during 1920 and would last into the early 1950s.

The mining of talc would also prove to a profitable business while the raising of cattle soon took hold along with sheep ranching. Dillon was once the largest exporter of sheep wool in Montana. Rich grasslands were conducive to the farming of sheep and cattle while the unspoiled natural wonders attracted a growing range of tourists soon after the conclusion of the Second World War.

During this time period, one of the most popular activities for Dillon and, indeed, for the entire area was the annual Labor Day Parade. Months of work would go into planning and creating the event, which featured a rodeo, concerts, and a variety of other attractions that drew people from all over the state.,

The many activities for the 1979 parade would be highlighted by the fly-over of two Convair F-106As from the Air National Guard's 186th Fighter Interceptor Squadron, 120th Fighter Interceptor Group, based out of Great Falls Airport. The fly-over, with roaring afterburners, was highly-anticipated by parade-goers and two passes were planned down Dillon's main boulevard.

On 3 September 1979, the two F-106As launched on schedule and met up for some high-altitude practice. They then flew to the town of White Sulphur Springs (about 150 miles northeast of Dillon) for similar Labor Day passes before once again climbing for altitude. The two jets descended to make their first run down Dillon and that went without a hitch. Climbing out, they came back around for a repeat performance. The end of Main Street was dominated by a large grain silo complex rising 150-feet into the air along with an Exxon fuel storage area. On this pass, the Sixes were very close – just a couple feet apart – and flying slowly with their noses raised high. Newspaper publisher Jerry Hawkins was taking photos and he later said, "I caught him coming in tip-to-tip with the other plane. It looked like his tail was down. I knew just before he hit, he was too low. I heard one poof but never got any impression of noise."

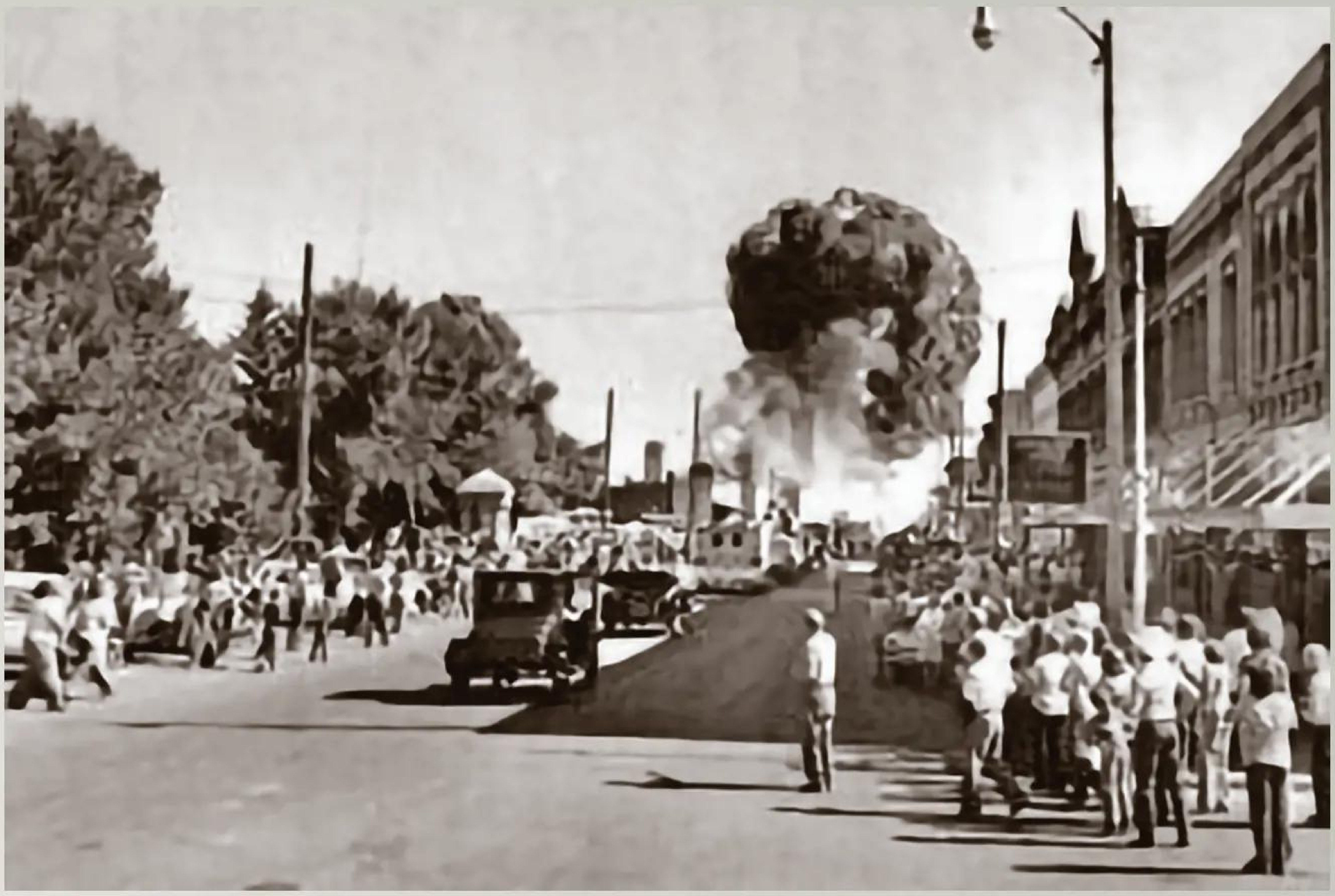
With noses pulled slightly up to retard speed and smoke pouring from the J75 turbojets, the pilots turned their Sixes to line up with Main Street. At a pre-arranged signal, both pilots lowered their landing gear and slightly advanced power. The two aircraft made for a splendid sight – and sound – as they came down the street at just 100 feet altitude in their distinctive glossy interceptor gray color scheme highlighted with blue trim while thousands of spectators waved and cheered.

There was a major problem. For whatever reason, the jets had started their initial run way too low. Even at their greatly reduced speed, the interceptors quickly gobbled up the length of the street. Local resident Norman Buss had forgotten about the parade and was driving into town from the opposite direction to visit the Post Office.

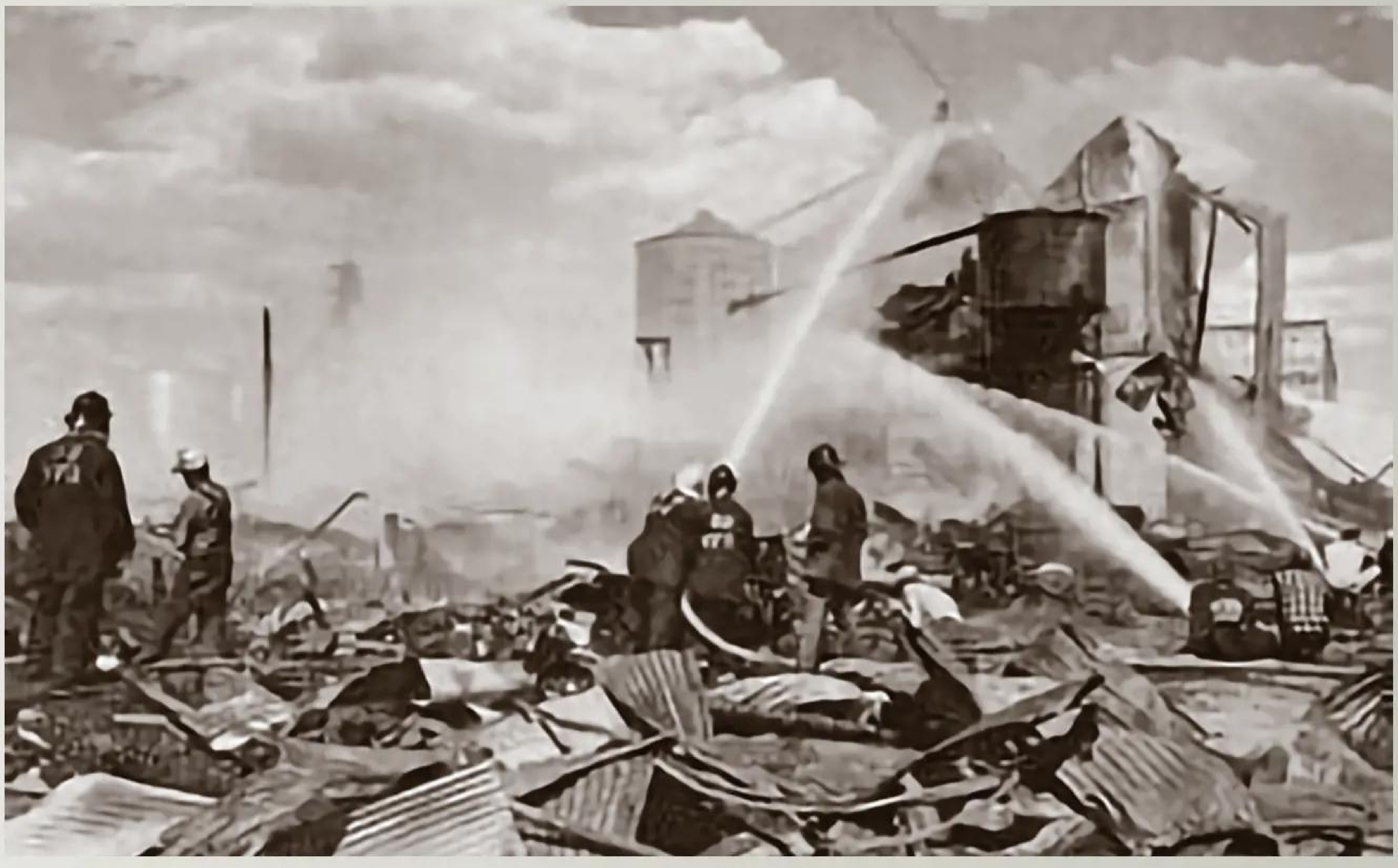
F-106A-75-CO 57-2458 was being piloted by 32-year-old Capt. Joel Orren Rudd and as Buss headed for the rapidly-approaching interceptors, Rudd's left wing sliced into the Dallas Livestock Grain Elevator resulting in an instant explosion as the wing vaporized and large pieces of the silo shot into the crowd.

Buss later said, "Suddenly, there was this fireball. I panicked. I didn't know what it was," he told reporters. "Almost immediately, my car was engulfed by the fireball and pieces of metal. I couldn't see anything. I was driving blind but I knew I had to get out of there or I would be a gonner." Buss "floored" the car but it immediately quit. He managed to restart the engine and drove out of the fire. Breaking out into daylight, Buss grabbed a fire extinguisher and began putting out his burning tires and door frames while he watched portions of Dillon burn. "I've carried that extinguisher for 20 years and never needed it until Monday. I'm just glad it worked."

After Rudd hit the silo, the majority of the left wing was gone and the Six rapidly rolled right. As noted in our main article, F-106 ejection seats had their problems. Rudd either activated the seat in one of two ways – through the pull-down visor or the handles in the seat. The canopy blew off the fuselage and Rudd was blasted into space. All this was happening in just fractions of seconds and by the time the pilot departed the plane, it had already rolled sideways, which meant Rudd went out parallel with the ground. There was no time for the parachute to activate and Rudd was killed while the Six dove into the ground and exploded. The pilot of the second Six immediately shoved the throttle through dent into burner, yanked the gear up, and got the hell out of Dillon.



Horrified spectators watching the mushrooming fireball.

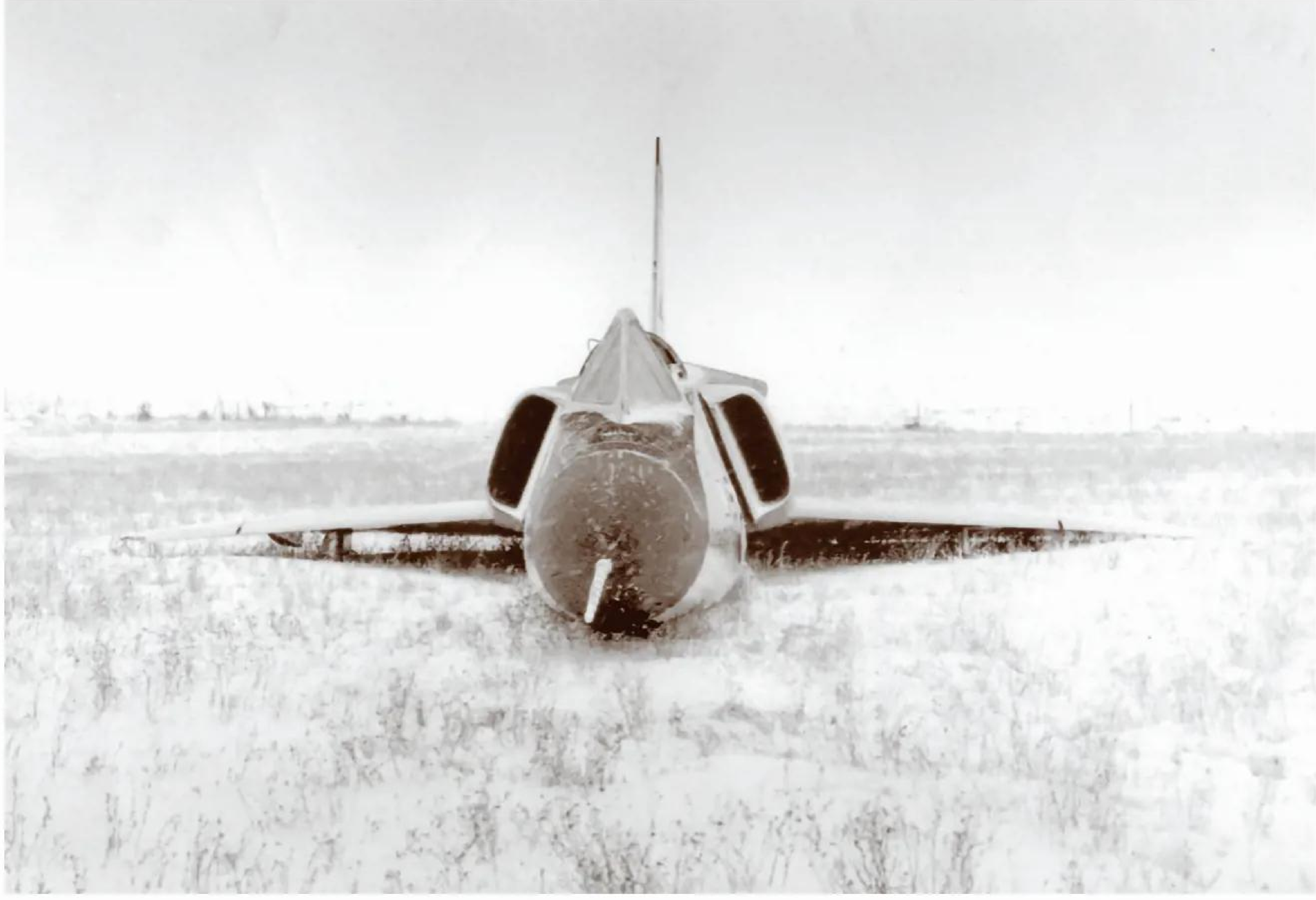


Rescue workers fight the many blazes started by the crashing interceptor.

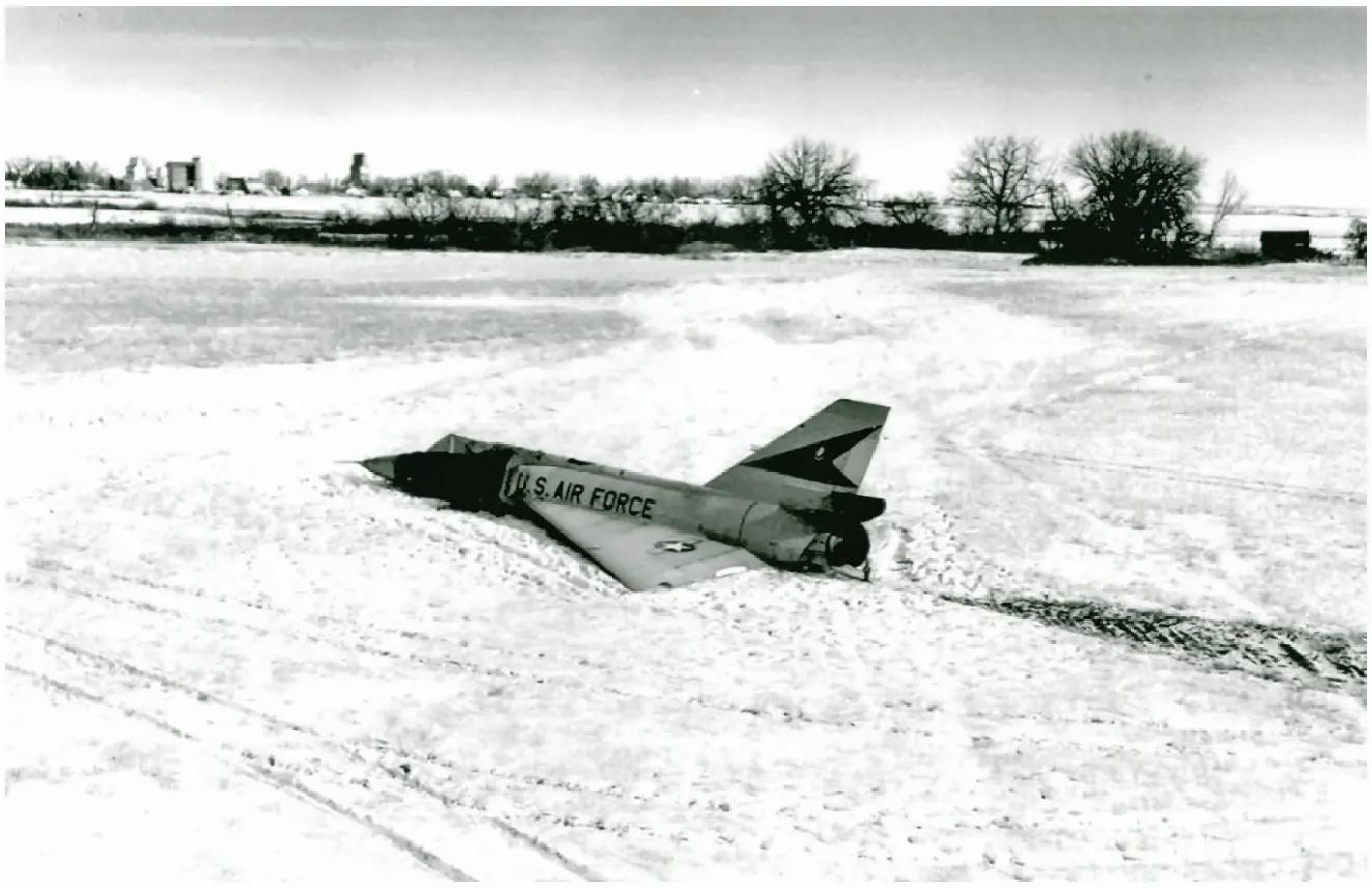
The burning fuselage of the stricken Six basically stayed together and went skidding down the road, hitting cars and people. Parade spectators scattered, running through burning debris and past small businesses that were now definitely knocked "out of business." Portions of the destroyed jet skipped and skidded down the street, injuring and burning around 80 people. One pregnant woman was badly burned and had to be airlifted to Salt Lake City so that her injuries could be treated. The Dillon Livestock Market's elevator had been destroyed by fire about 2.5-years earlier but had been rebuilt to a height of 110-feet and perhaps this increased height caused some of the trouble. With the height of that elevator, and the other elevator at 150-feet, the 100-foot altitude of the Sixes was a recipe for disaster. At the Exxon bulk fuel plant, the four 17,000-gallon storage tanks were fortunately far from being full and this prevented a massive explosion that could have completely leveled the little town.

It took several days to put out all the fires and smoldering buildings and then the process of rebuilding could start. Fortunately, the Forest Service had two helicopters from Rocky Mountain Helicopters nearby along with at least one fixed-wing aircraft (possibly an Avenger, but reports were not clear) and they almost immediately began dropping retardant on the fires, eventually unloading over 2000 gallons.

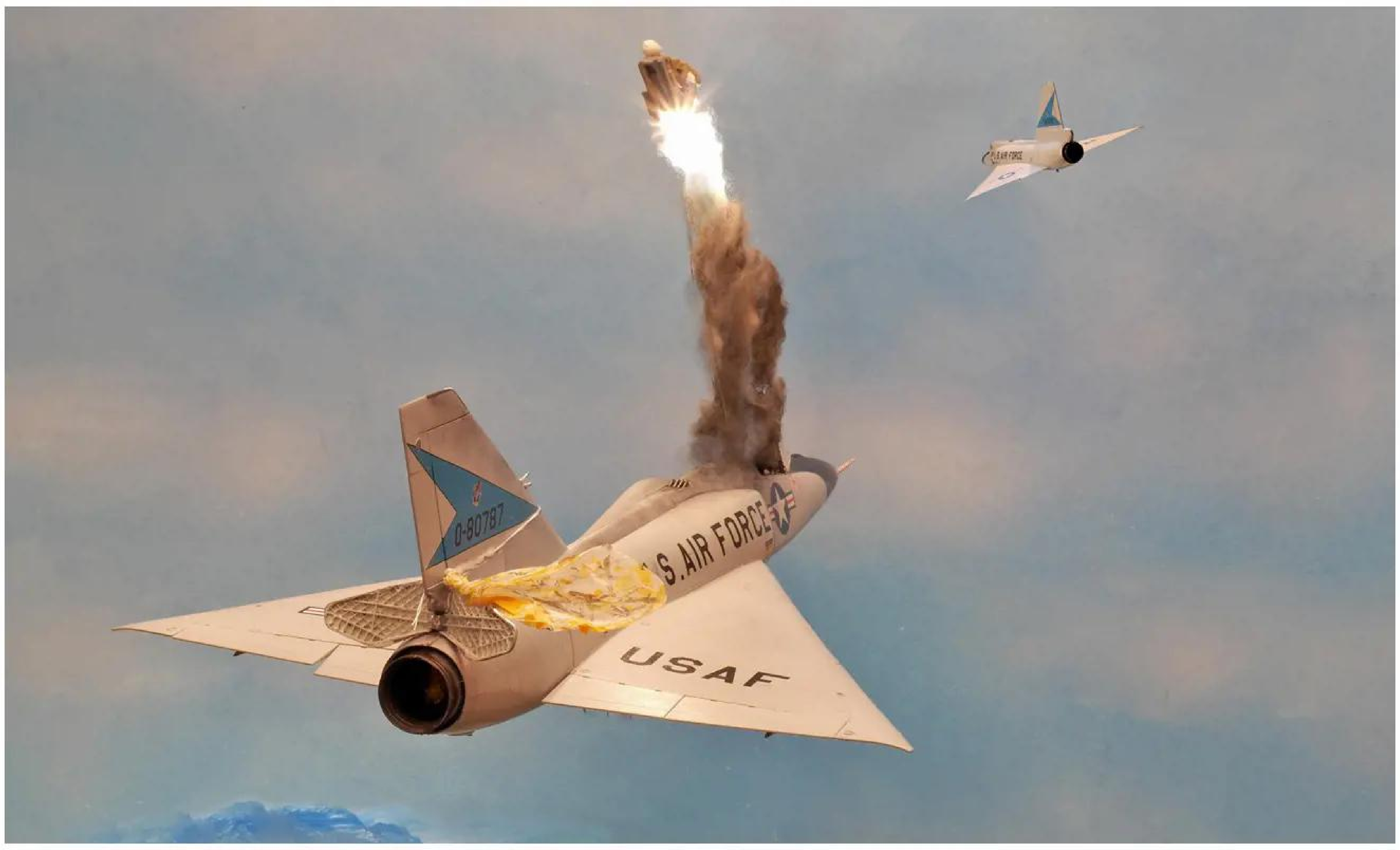
There was a big investigation with lots of finger-pointing but the sad fact was that many small businesses had been very badly hurt. While the investigation went on, the USAF realized that they were getting a lot of bad press by delaying payments to those that had been damaged by the crash of the Six. Some payments started going out, but it took a long time for the town to recover and the event is still remembered today. The USAF eventually installed a memorial in Dillon to commemorate "the day the Six came to town."



To the farmers that first arrived on the scene, the idling F-106A presented a very strange site.



The running engine melted the snow behind the F-106A. Note the silos and other farm buildings in the background — an indication that the F-106A could have caused tremendous damage if it had come down in a populated area.



Depiction of what the ejection would have looked like from the F-106A as it was in a flat spin.

B-seat was quite complicated and there were some unsuccessful ejections that resulted in pilot fatalities (one source states that the first twelve ejections were all fatal but this is unsubstantiated — see the sidebar in this article). The third F-106 seat was the Weber Zero-Zero ROCAT (for Rocket Catapult) seat. Weber created this seat to operate at up to 600 knots. The Weber Zero-Zero seat was retrofitted to the F-106 series after 1965.

WASN'T A CORNFIELD... WASN'T A BOMBER!

This brief discourse on problems with the F-106A along with notes on its various ejection seats brings us back to the start of our story — a freezing cold 2 February 1970 day high over the terrain of Montana and a typical training flight for the F-106As of the 71st Fighter Interceptor Squadron operating out of Malmstrom AFB. By now, the 106 (or "Six" as it was called by pilots and crews) had become an aircraft beloved by its pilots but it was also an unforgiving machine that demanded every bit of the pilot's skill.

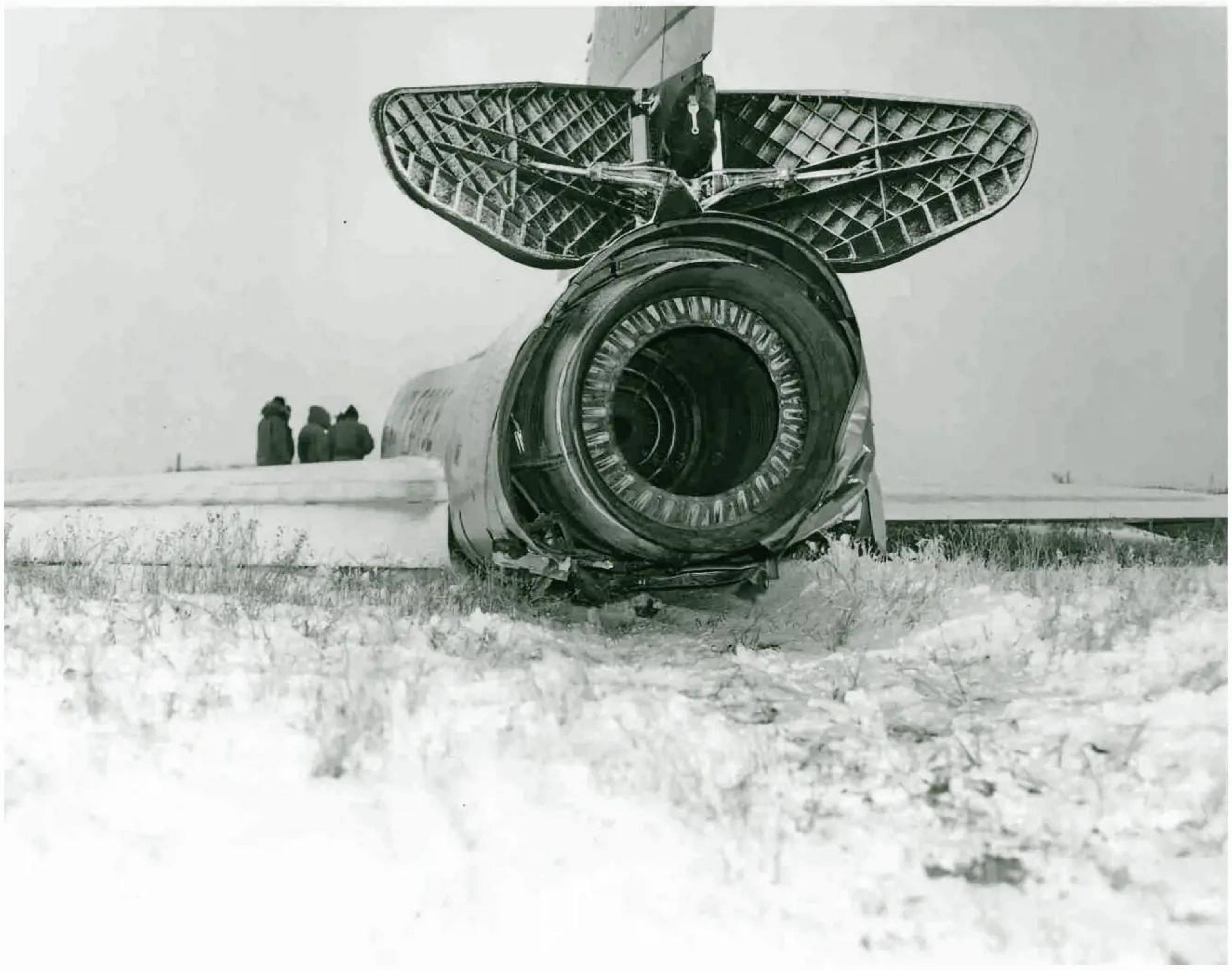
The Delta Dart could be equipped with several different types of air-to-air weapons but we must remember that missiles of time were not particularly accurate. Therefore, the F-106A could also be fitted with a fearsome and horrible weapon — the nuclear-tipped AIM-2 Genie. The Genie could be fired off at a Soviet bomber formation and a direct hit would not be required to bring down the attack bombers. The nuclear blast would take care of that — ensuring destruction of the Soviets while also doing all sorts of unpleasant things to those that had the bad luck to be living underneath of the path of the bombers.

The 71st's mission that day was a "two versus two" air combat training flight that would comprise four F-106s. However, one of the F-106s had to abort after it drag chute unceremoniously deployed while taxiing on the ramp. The mission now turned into a "two vs. one" mock fight. The pilot flying "one" was Tom Curtis while the "two" comprised Gary Foust (the only lieutenant in the squadron and the Six he was flying was usually assigned to Maj. Wolford, the squadron's maintenance officer) and Maj. Jim Lowe.

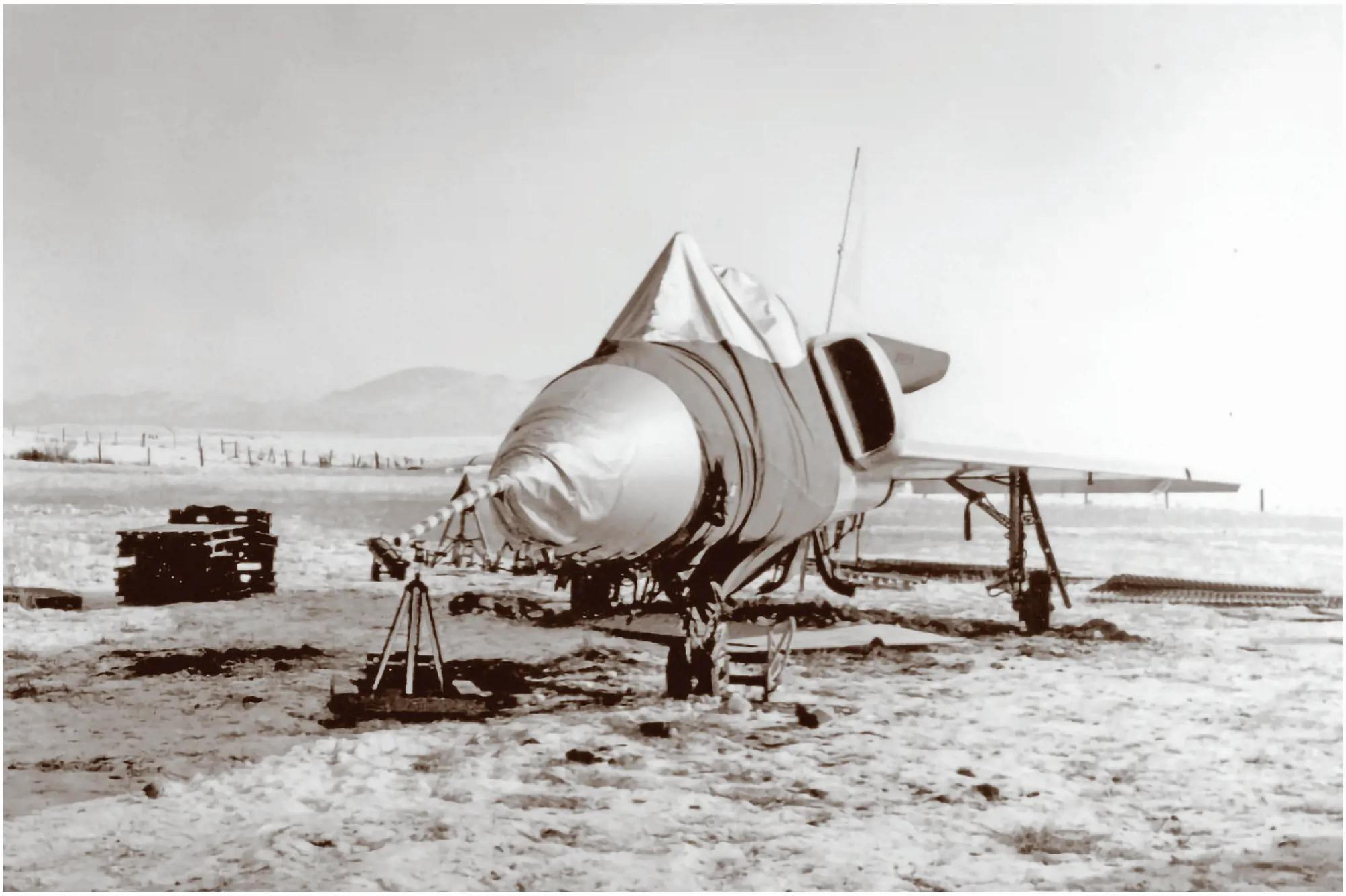
Reaching the assigned area, the sides separated and each proceeded to the end of their training space and this meant there was about a 20-mile separation between the aircraft. The rules of engagement specified that neither Curtis nor Foust and Lowe could try to gain an advantage over their opponent until they roared past each other. Then, the fight would be on.

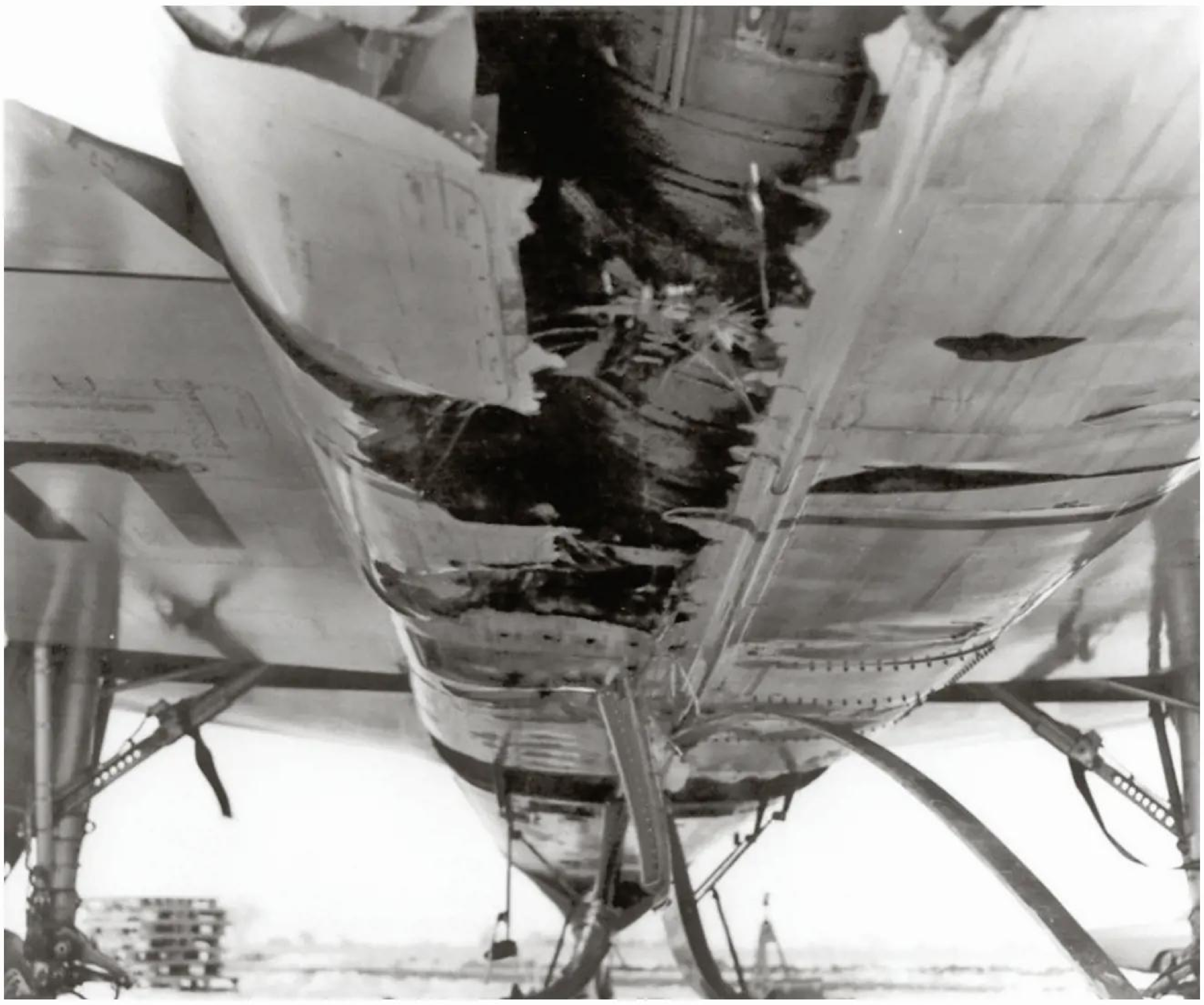
The whole point of the exercise was to outmaneuver the opponent. Curtis was the more experienced of the trio and he would later recount: "This was a big ego thing... who was the winner, etc. I figured I could handle Gary pretty easy, but I did not trust Jimmy." Wracking his 106 around and shoving the throttle through the detent into full afterburner, Curtis went head-on at his opponents as his Six passed through Mach 1.9. He then pulled back on the stick and climbed through 38,000 feet.

"We got into a vertical rolling scissors. I gave Foust a high-G rudder reversal," said Curtis. "He tried to stay with me but that is when he lost it."

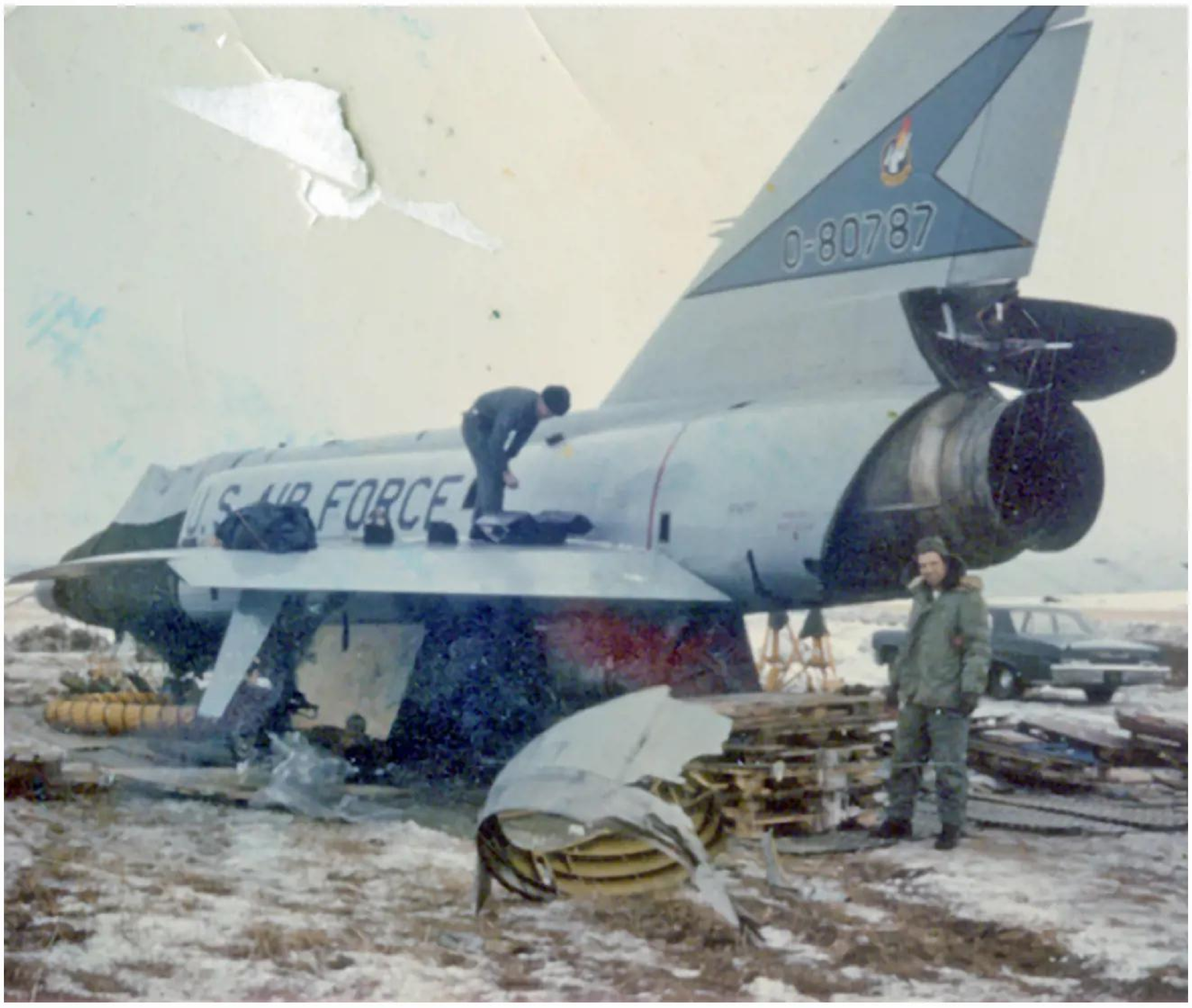

In an attempt to get the aircraft out of the spin, the drag chute was deployed but all it did was immediately wrap around the vertical tail.

Foust's F-106A stalled during the steep pull and the aircraft went into a post-stall gyration — the sleek delta-winged interceptor rolled left, then right, and suddenly swapped ends. Gary tried to regain control but to no avail. Fortunately, the Six then fell into a flat spin at 35,000-feet. The big interceptor began almost leisurely circular turns as it started to descend. No fighter pilot likes a flat spin since they are almost impossible to recover from. "It's like


The salvage process begins. The F-106A was raised up so that the gear could be lowered. The plane was defueled and protective covers were added to the forward fuselage.



One the plane was raised, the damage to the undersurface of the rear fuselage was clearly visible.



Damaged snapshot showing the airmen beginning to disassemble the Six.

the pitot tube [in the extreme nose] was stationary with the aircraft slowly rotating around it," said Curtis. "It was just very flat."

Gary later noted, "It immediately went into a stall, then a flat spin to the left. The ground elevation was about 8000-feet so I did not have a lot of room to play with. I took my hands off the controls to see if the plane would recover by itself. It didn't."

In the cockpit of the spinning interceptor, Foust tried to put every bit of his training to work in order to recover from what could be a deadly situation. By now, he was down to 15,000 and all the recovery methods had failed. Lowe was an instructor pilot and he followed the spinning interceptor while offering Gary advice. They were now at 12,000-feet.

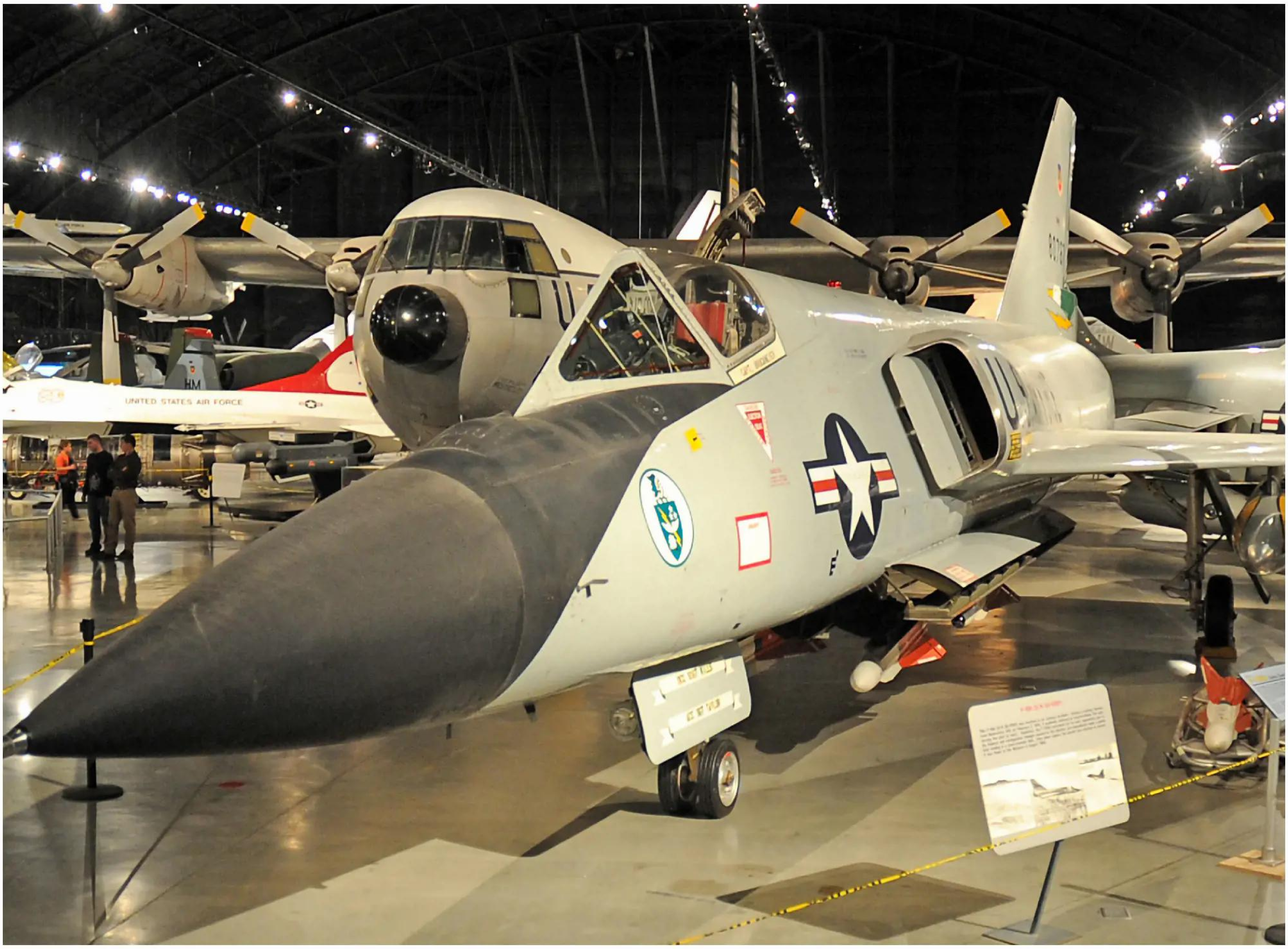
"Deploy your drag chute," yelled Lowe over the radio. Sometimes, a deployed drag chute could yank a plane out of spin, but not this time. "The idea didn't work," said Lowe. "The chute just flapped in the air and then wrapped itself around the Six's vertical tail."

It was now time for Gary to get out. Through his many recovery procedures, Foust had actuated the takeoff trim button and this trimmed all control surfaces to a takeoff setting. In its slow, flat spin the Six was only indicating about 175-knots, which was an excellent glide speed.

Straightening his back, Gary grabbed the overhead visor and pulled down, thus activating the seat. With a huge bang, the canopy flew off and Gary blasted out of the cockpit on a trail of flame and smoke and shot into a very hostile environment. Everything worked exactly as it should and Foust was soon hanging from his parachute. The other two pilots watched in amazement as the Six recovered from the flat spin, wobbled a bit, and flew straight and level off "into the sunset." What had happened? Perhaps it was the change in balance from the force of the ejection against the fuselage, or the change in aerodynamics caused by the departing canopy and ejection process.

Watching the multi-million-dollar interceptor fly away, Lowe called out, "Gary, you better get back in that thing!" Even though the area was very remote, this was a serious situation and one Six followed the pilotless interceptor while the other followed Gary down. Both pilots were radioing base with updates not only on Gary's descent but also the fact that the pilotless Six was now flying on its own and the last thing they needed was to have the interceptor crash into a populated area.

From his perch under the parachute, Foust could clearly see all the drama going on but he also knew that he was descending toward the snow-covered Montana mountains in the middle of a very cold winter. Fortunately, others were also watching him. Locals, alerted by all the noise in the sky, jumped into



The aircraft as it appears today on display in the National Museum of the USAF.

their snowmobiles and began to follow the parachute. Gary made a relatively soft landing in snow and bushes and managed to struggle out of his parachute harness. The snowmobiles soon found the very cold pilot and loaded him up before heading off for somewhere warm. He eventually got back to the squadron and where he found a warm bed and a large bottle of whiskey waiting for him. Overhead, the surviving two Sixes briefly went into burner before heading back to base.

The pilotless Six continued on, slowly descending until it made an almost perfect gear-up touch down near Big Sandy, Montana. Skidding through brush and snow in a relatively straight line, the plane eventually began a shallow right turn before tearing through a livestock fence (ripping a large gash in the belly), missing a rock pile, and coming to a stop about 400 yards from a paved road. A local sheriff had not only been watching the action in the sky but had also been listening to all the excited talk on his police radio.

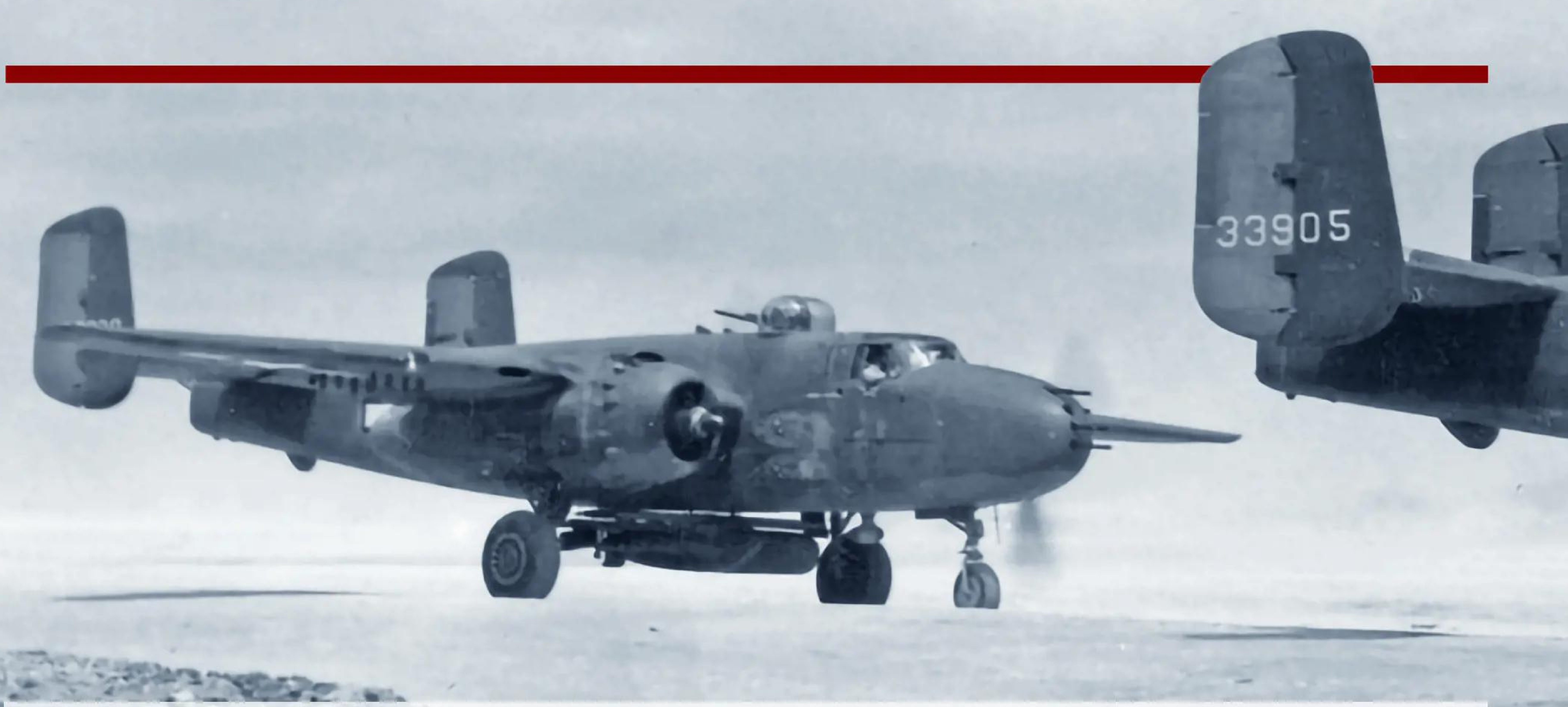
Spotting the aircraft, he went crashing through the snow and pulled up alongside the Six. "It was really strange," he later said to a reporter. "The entire area was dead quiet but the plane's engine was still running. I went up to the cockpit and looked in and then ran back to my cruiser. Someone said for me to just get away from the plane and let it run out of fuel." That is exactly what he did. Since the throttle was in idle, it took about one-hour and 45-minutes for the fuel tanks to go empty.

With the two "surviving" Sixes and Gary back at home base, what was to be done with the incorrectly named "cornfield bomber?" (This was the name that an over-excited press gave to the aircraft.) Gary later commented "it was a wheatfield and the Six certainly wasn't a bomber so I do not know how the name 'cornfield bomber' stuck to the incident." At first, it seemed that perhaps the plane might be scrapped but the Six was an expensive tool in the USAF arsenal so a skilled crew from Hill AFB in Utah, arrived on the frozen field and began several very unpleasant days of raising the interceptor up, lowering the gear, placing a trestle under the fuselage, and starting the process of taking apart the F-106A and transporting it via a railcar back to the Sacramento Air Logistics Center at McClellan AFB in California. It should be noted that spares for the Six were not exactly plentiful and repair duties took a couple of years but 58-0787 was returned to flight status and assigned to the 49th Fighter Interceptor Squadron, 21st Air Division, at Griffiss AFB in New York. After 58-0787 was retired from active duty, it was not modified into a QF-106A target drone to be shot down by a newer generation of fighter aircraft (the fate of many Sixes). Rather, it was selected for display in the National Museum of the USAF where it is now beautifully restored and able to tell its unusual and exciting story for all those visiting the superb facility. **AC**

WAR OF THE WINGED TORPEDOES

ATTACKING ENEMY SHIPPING IN NAGASAKI HARBOR DURING THE FINAL DAYS OF WWII, MITCHELLS CARRYING THE GT-1 GLIDE TORPEDOES ACHIEVED MIXED RESULTS

BY MAURICE E. SMITH



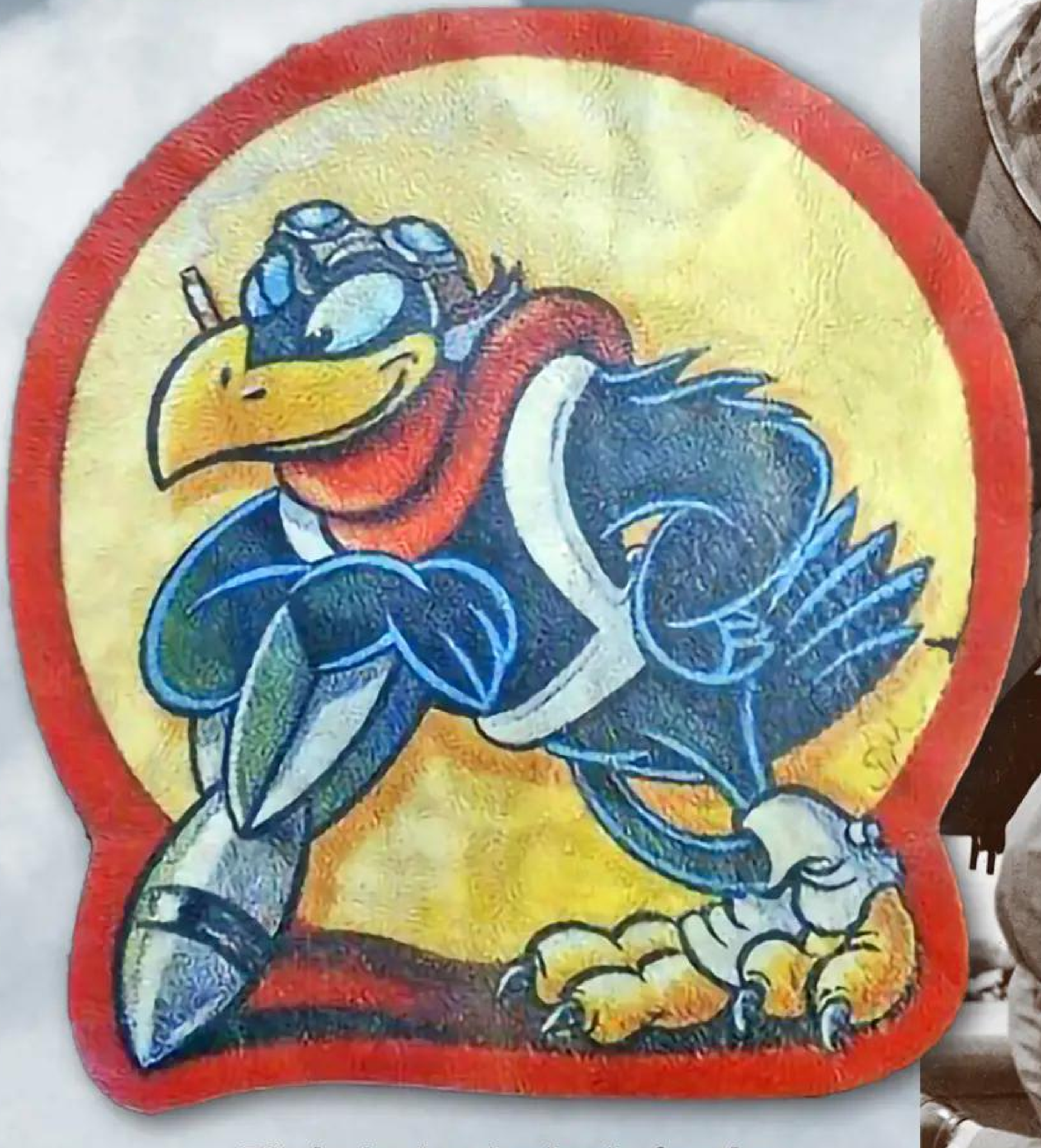
On 1 May 1944, the Wright R-2600s on the first of a fleet of 18 North American B-25J Mitchells came to life amidst oily clouds of smoke as the propellers began to beat an increasing tempo in the cool morning air at Fairfield-Suisun Army Air Base (now Travis AFB) in northern California. The aircraft were destined for a remote and quiet field on the Hawaiian island of Oahu. As that first B-25J, heavily laden with “Tokyo Tanks” — the extra fuel tanks in the bomb bay required for the long journey over the Pacific — rose into the damp air, the balance of 17 Mitchells would follow. However, aboard the new medium bombers the crews did not know their final destination nor their true mission in America’s war against the Japanese Empire.

Specially picked and chosen from combat transition crews at Greenville Army Air Force Base in South Carolina, each six-man crew consisted of a pilot, copilot, navigator/bombardier, radioman/waist gunner, tail gunner/armorer, and top turret gunner/mechanic.

Twenty of these crews had been carefully selected from the many combat transition training crews at Greenville by Col. Oliver H. Stout who was the base commander. The next stop for these 20 crews would be Eglin Army Air Force Base in Florida. At the time, Eglin was a secluded and wide-spread field where a great deal of experimental work (especially with armament) was being conducted.

At Eglin, these selected crews would soon be introduced to an experimental weapon that had been in operation for just a short period of time. This new and novel weapon was called

Fitted with their GT-1 glide torpedoes, the B-25J Mitchells begin to takeoff for the mission to Nagasaki habor with B-25J “*LUKi BETS*” in the lead.



Flight jacket insignia for the 47th Bomb Squadron.

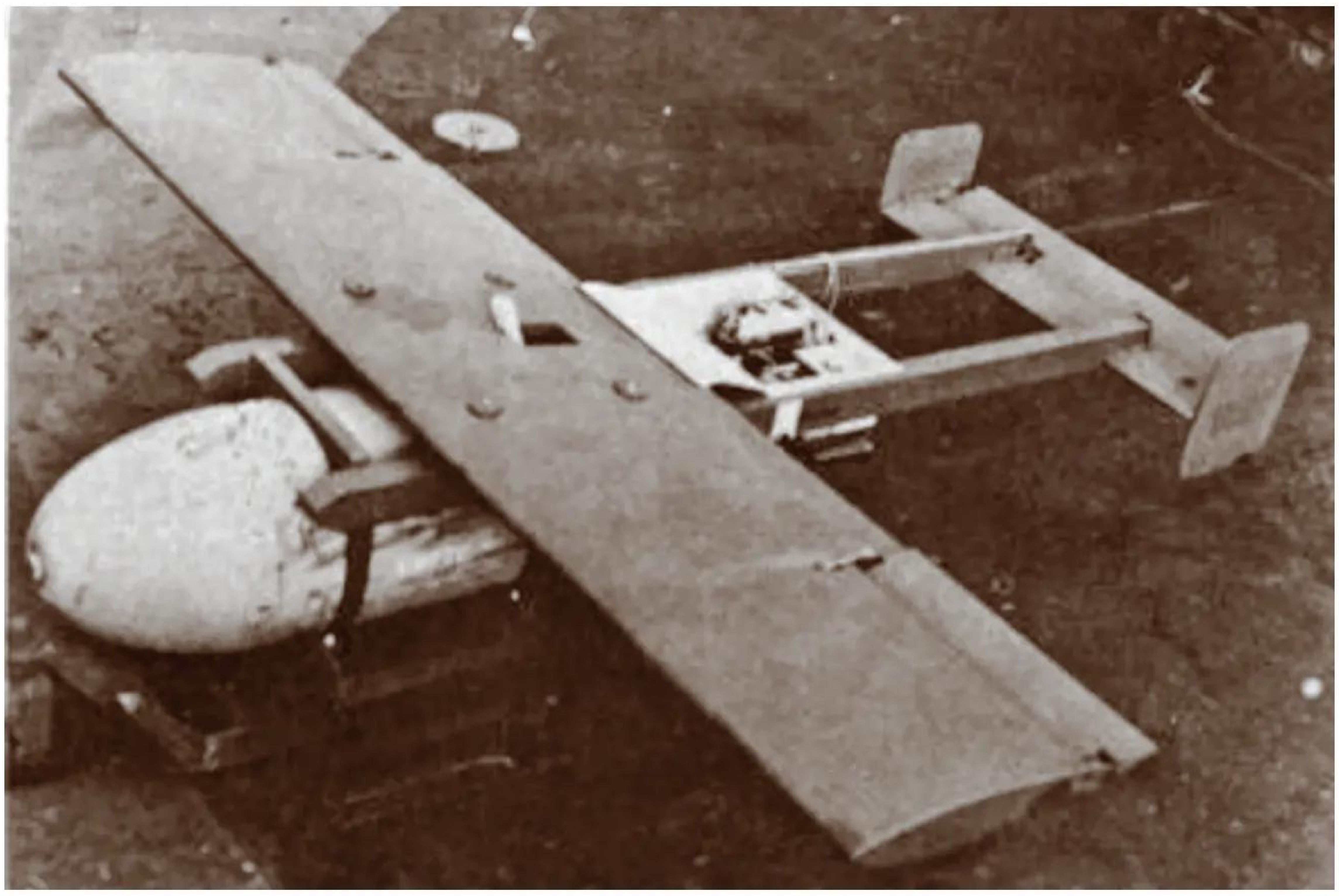
James P. Muri (second from left, front row) and his Marauder crew on Midway Island.

the "Flying Torpedo." Consisting of a standard US Navy torpedo that had been modified by USAAF engineers so that it could "fly" for distances ranging from ten to 20 miles, enter the ocean, and then proceed towards an enemy target for up to 19,500 yards, the Flying Torpedo was hoped to have great success than the earlier Flying Bomb, which had proven to be a failure.

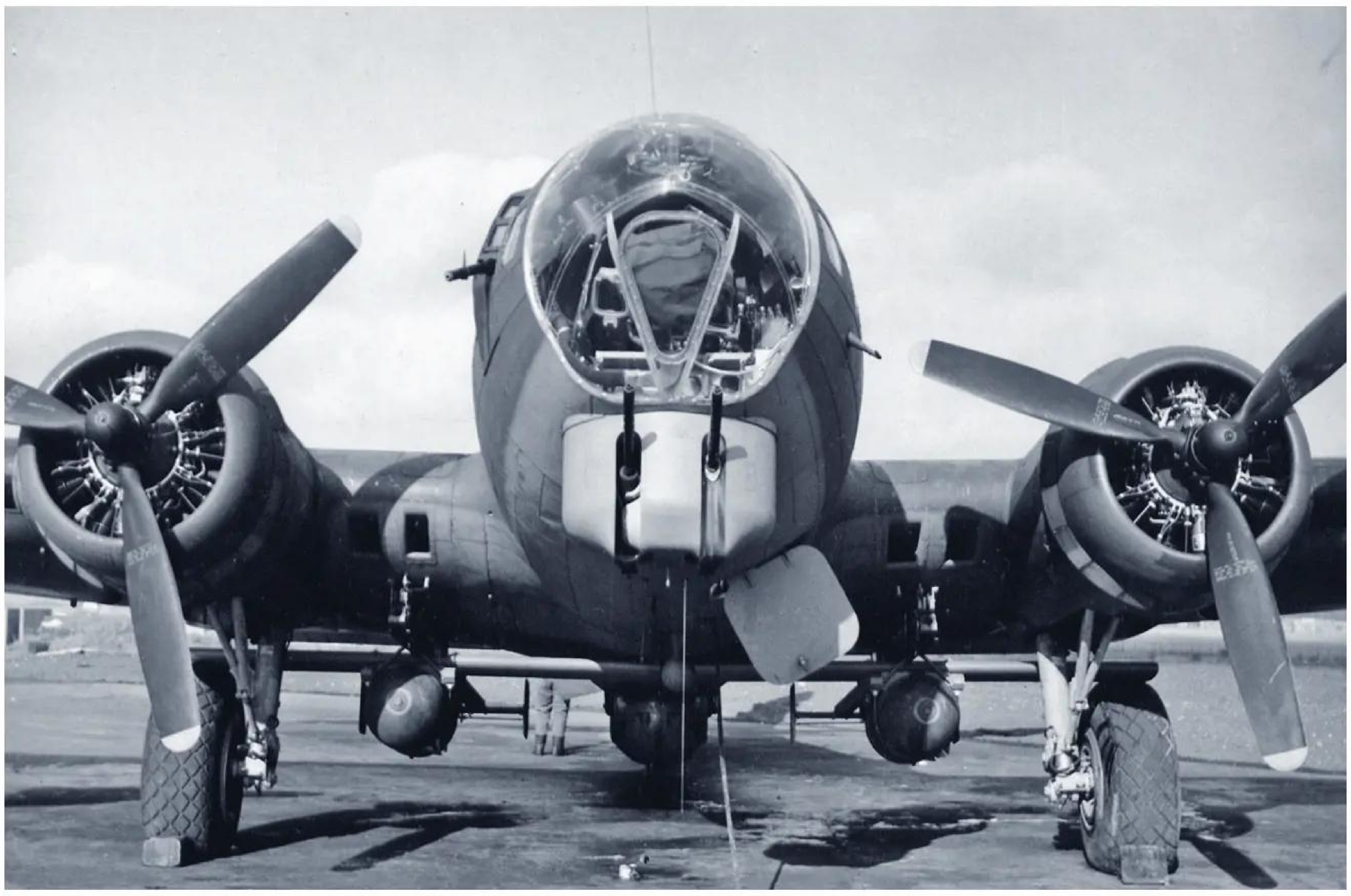
In Nazi-controlled Germany, scientists had initiated the concept of building a glider weapon that would be carried aloft to 25,000 feet and then dropped against an enemy target some 30 miles distant. This weapon would carry a 1000-pound high-explosive warhead. Necessity is often the mother of invention, and the idea for the weapon came about from the heavy losses among *Luftwaffe* bombers attacking the British Isles during the Battle of Britain.

Anti-aircraft guns, balloons dragging steel cables, and the superb Hawker Hurricanes and Supermarine Spitfires of the Royal Air Force's Fighter Command were tearing through the *Luftwaffe* bombers at a rapid rate. These bombers could enjoy the protection of escorting Messerschmitt Bf 109E fighters for only a limited amount of time because of the short-range of the *Emil*, which would have to break away and return to bases in France before running out of fuel. The German aircraft would have to enter this web of defense while heading towards targets in London and other cities and then endure it again while returning. Wouldn't it be better to create a "glide bomb" that could be dropped from high altitude and then "steered" to the target? Released some 30 miles from targets, the bombers could completely elude some of the protective forces.

Seeing what the Germans were up to, British "boffins" tried to create their own similar weapon. However, the British were plagued with problems on their prototype glide bombs since



The unsuccessful GB-1 glide bomb.



Fortress fitted with two GB-1 glide bombs for the raid on Cologne.

winds aloft were usually unpredictable and this played havoc with the needed accuracy of such a weapon. Thus, in November 1940, the British decided to gather up all their accumulated data and turn it over to the Americans.

On 13 February 1941, a Consolidated LB-30 Liberator converted to a transport carried W/Cmdr. J.D. Bruce, a few assistants, and crates of data and components to the Air Material Division at Wright Field in Dayton, Ohio. However, after initial meetings and an exchange of data, no further liaison with the British on the advanced project was carried out. Instead, everything was moved to the Experimental Engineering Section of the Air Material Division. Direct responsibility for the project was undertaken by Lt. Col. F.O. Carroll who was the Chief of the Experimental Engineering Section at Wright Field.

Sensing the potential value of such a project, on 17 March 1941, Gen. H.H. “Hap” Arnold, after having been briefed on the “winged bomb” project, directed that work on the program be started at once “to develop a simple and effective bomb with a set of wings.” However, Lt. Col. Carroll proceeded with experiments for both controlled and uncontrolled winged bombs and it was at this point that the weapons were named “Glide Bombs.” Work on a controlled Glide Bomb was basically dropped when Gen. Arnold once again ordered that top priority be given to a “simple winged bomb with stabilization system only.” Work on a completely controlled weapon was given a distant second place.

During December 1941, Lt. Col. Carroll reported to Gen. Echols, Chief, Air Material Division, that successful flights of six to seven miles had been made with Glide Bombs. The wings for these weapons were made by Aeronca, a famous maker of pre-war light aircraft. The tests had been carried out at Muroc Dry Lake in California with Glide Bombs carrying 1000-pound warheads. By February 1942, Carroll reported to Echols that he had flown successful tests with a 2000-pound warhead on a weapon that had been fitted with a gyroscopic guidance system provided by the Hammond Instrument Company of Chicago, Illinois.

Re-reading the report the next month, Arnold fired off a memo that, once again, he did not want a weapon with a complicated guidance system but rather a very simple bomb with wings and rudimentary controls. Given top priority on 30 June 1942 with the designation GB-1, the Air Material Center continued work on “servo-controlled, high-wing assembly.” These “servo-controlled” weapons were developed by Aeronca and Hammond and on 18 August 1942, tests of the GB-1 were stated to be “successful” after some 57 flights with 2000-pound warheads.

After the successful tests at Eglin Field, the concept was “sold” back to the British and the Air Staff directed the immediate procurement of the GB-1. Boeing was ordered to modify 40 B-17 Flying Fortresses to accommodate the external bomb rack to carry and release the GB-1. In a joint operation, the USAAF 8th Air Force and the Royal Air Force carried out, after considerable squabbling, a glide bomb mission over Cologne, Germany, on 28 July 1943 by the 303rd Bomb Group. The mission met with very little success because the high and variable winds incurred at high altitudes resulted in great inaccuracy. This was the first and only glide bomb mission flown against the Axis in Europe by either the RAF or the USAAF.

Because of Gen. Arnold’s request for the production of a simple glide bomb with stabilization only, the field unit at

Eglin had continued their testing even after the GB-1 was taken over from them by Wright Field, given back to the Brits, and even after the failed Cologne mission.

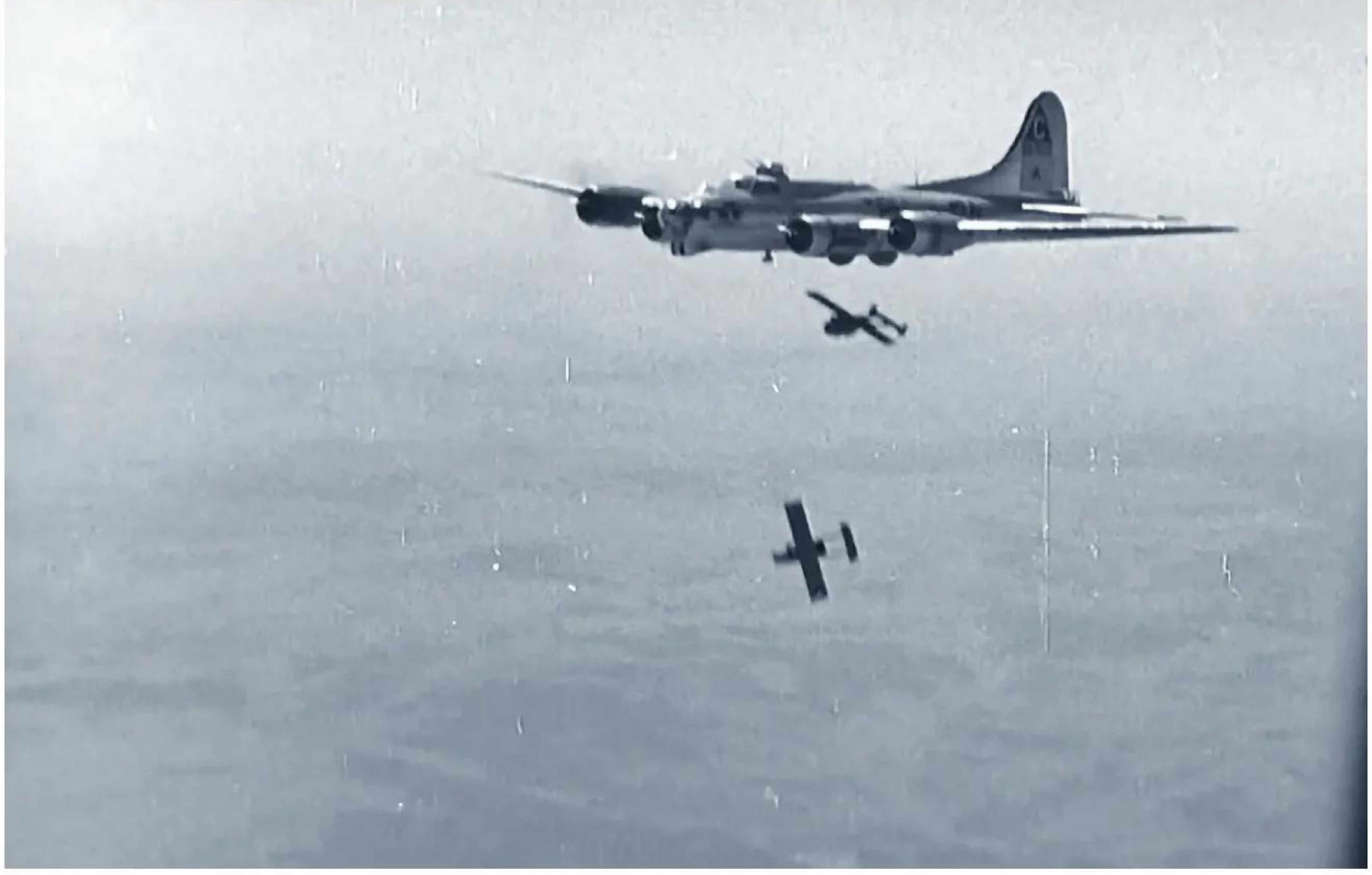
In joint interest with the US Navy, the field unit switched over from the GB-1 to the Navy's Mark 13-2A 2000-lb naval torpedo. It was called GT-1 for Glide Torpedo but a number of references also refer to it as a "hydrobomb." It was, however, basically the "simple winged bomb with stabilization system only" that Gen. Arnold had requested. The GT-1 functioned successfully where the GB-1 failed because, unlike the accuracy required of a bomb, a torpedo could land short of its target and still make its run underwater after it landed. This, whether the torpedo landed 100 or 1000 yards short of the target, made little difference.

What did make a great difference, however, was what was discovered by the First Proving Ground Torpedo Squadron of the USAAF Proving Ground Command at Eglin by one Maj. James P. Muri. As a pilot, Muri flew a B-26 Marauder named *Susie-Q* and fitted with a torpedo, he took the plane to war during the Battle of Midway. After dropping his weapon, he made a famous escape by flying down the length of the Japanese carrier *Akagi*. When he landed back at Midway, his Marauder had over 500 shell holes and he thus became the USAAF expert at delivering aerial torpedoes. Muri discovered in the routine tests conducted that a torpedo dropped from the air must enter the water at a proper angle. Too steep an entry tumbled the torpedo, damaging the control surfaces or even breaking the torpedo's back. Incorrect entry could even make the torpedo porpoise in and out of the water. Too flat an entry also damaged the control surfaces and interior machinery to an extent that the weapon might not function.

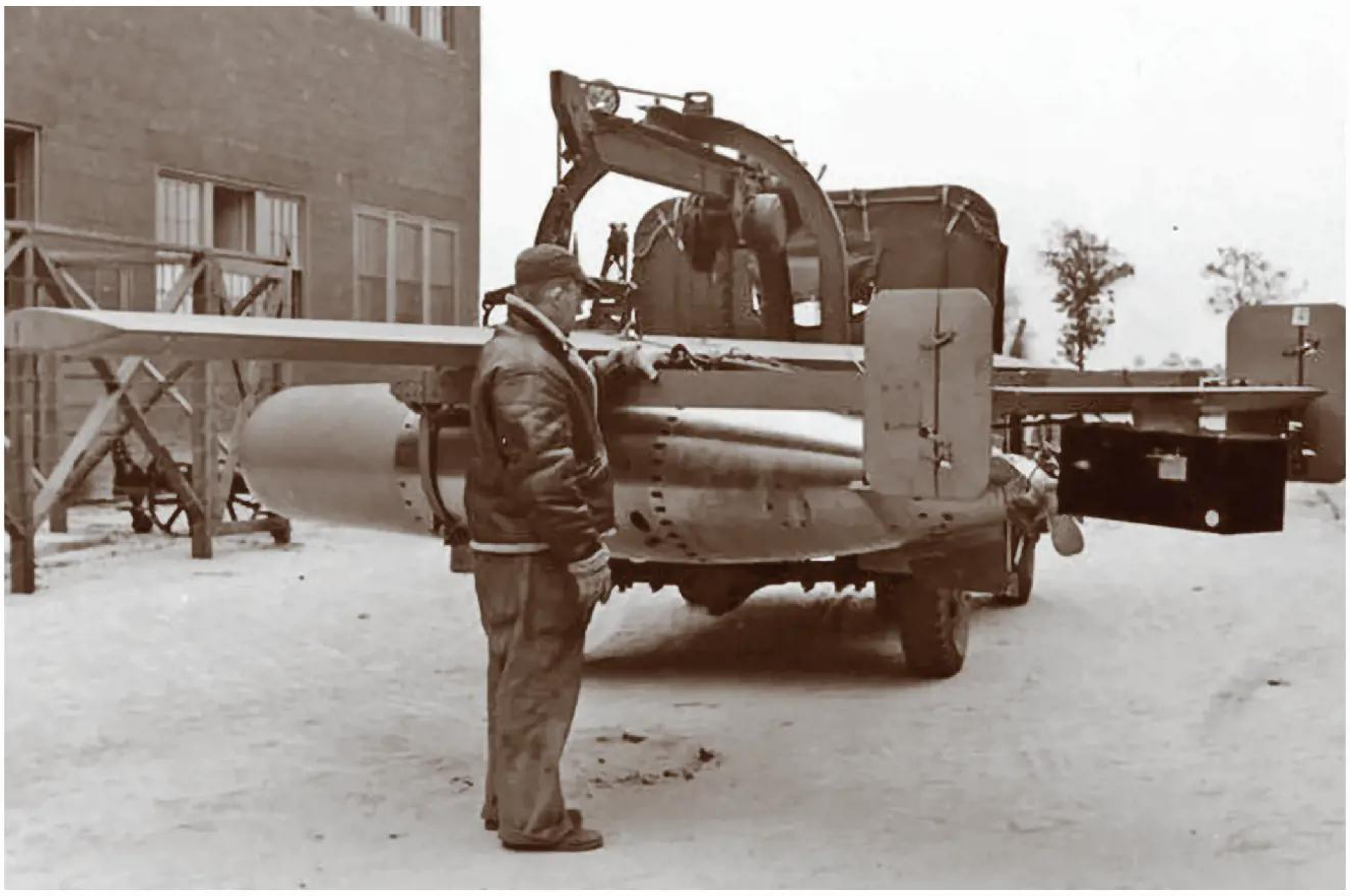
With the assistance of the Navy, it was determined that the best angle of entry into the water by such a torpedo is between a 20 and 30-degree angle. The glider framework designed by Aeronca could not carry the torpedo at an angle of more than eight degrees downward angle and still maintain a proper glide angle for the glider's descent. To obtain a satisfactory aerodynamic flying characteristic, Maj. Muri further determined that it was necessary to mount the torpedo on the glider with its longitudinal axis parallel with the booms of the glider. It was also determined that by doing so, at the aircraft's flying speed, the wings in that position carried the weight of the torpedo independently. This relief from the 2000-lb weight of the torpedo also partially compensated for the external drag of the GT-1 on the aircraft's speed.

All this resulted in the problem of how to mount the torpedo on the glider to have the proper position for carriage on the aircraft and the glide angle of the glider and still obtain the proper angle of entry of the torpedo into the water. This problem was finally, and successfully, solved by providing the retaining pins that held the torpedo to the glider with an explosive charge that was actuated by a paravane flying about 40 feet behind and below the glider. When the paravane struck the water, the torpedo was then blown into the water at the correct angle of entry. Thus was born the "Glider-Borne Pattern Torpedo," or GT-1.

When the report of the successful development of the GT-1 made by the USAAF Proving Ground Command at Eglin finally reached the office of the Chief of the USAAF in Washington during January 1944, it came at a most opportune time. The Chief of Staff had just called a meeting with the top brass to discuss a loudly-voiced concern of



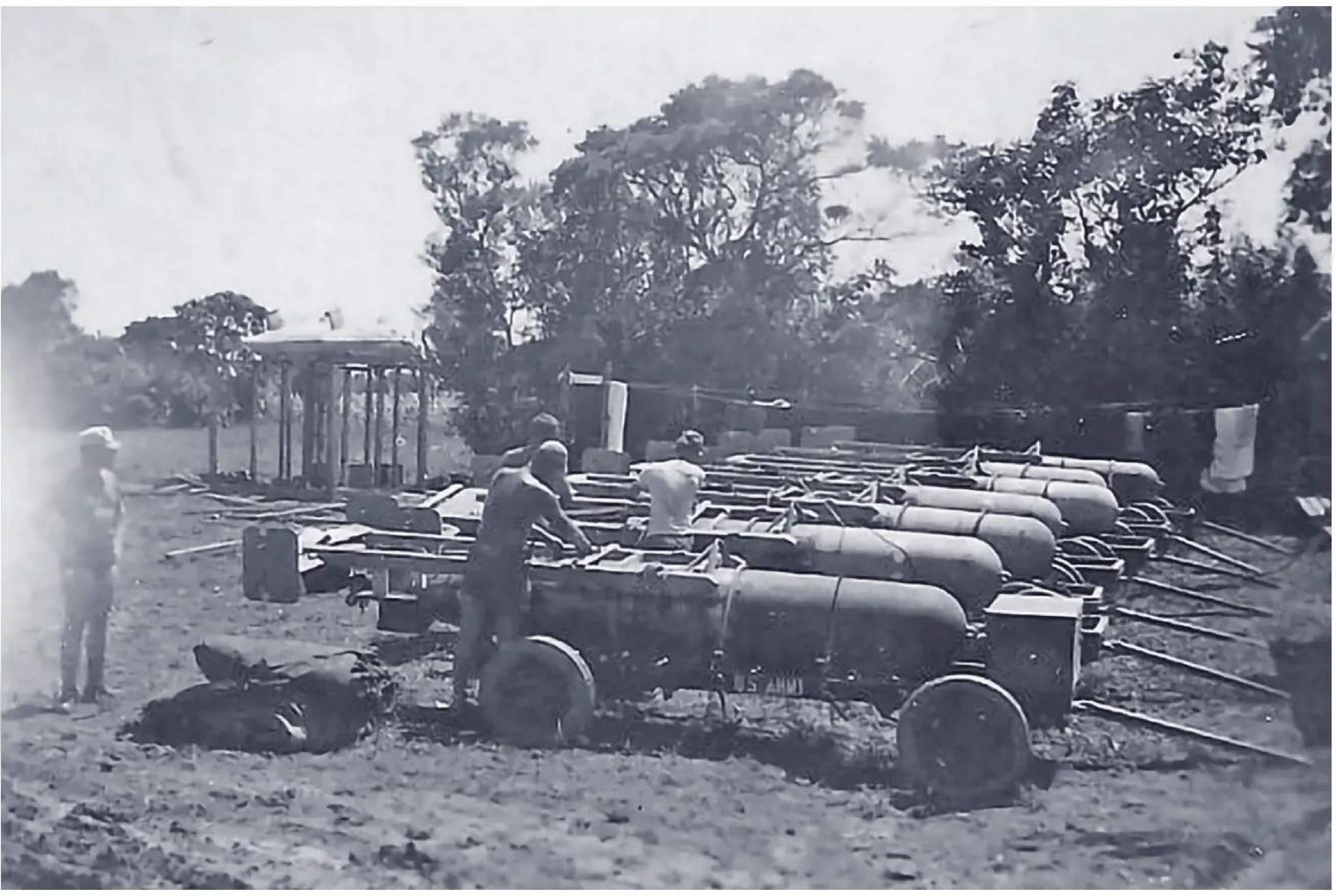
Fortress of the 427th Bomb Squadron, 303rd Bomb Group, dropping GB-1 glide bombs on Cologne.



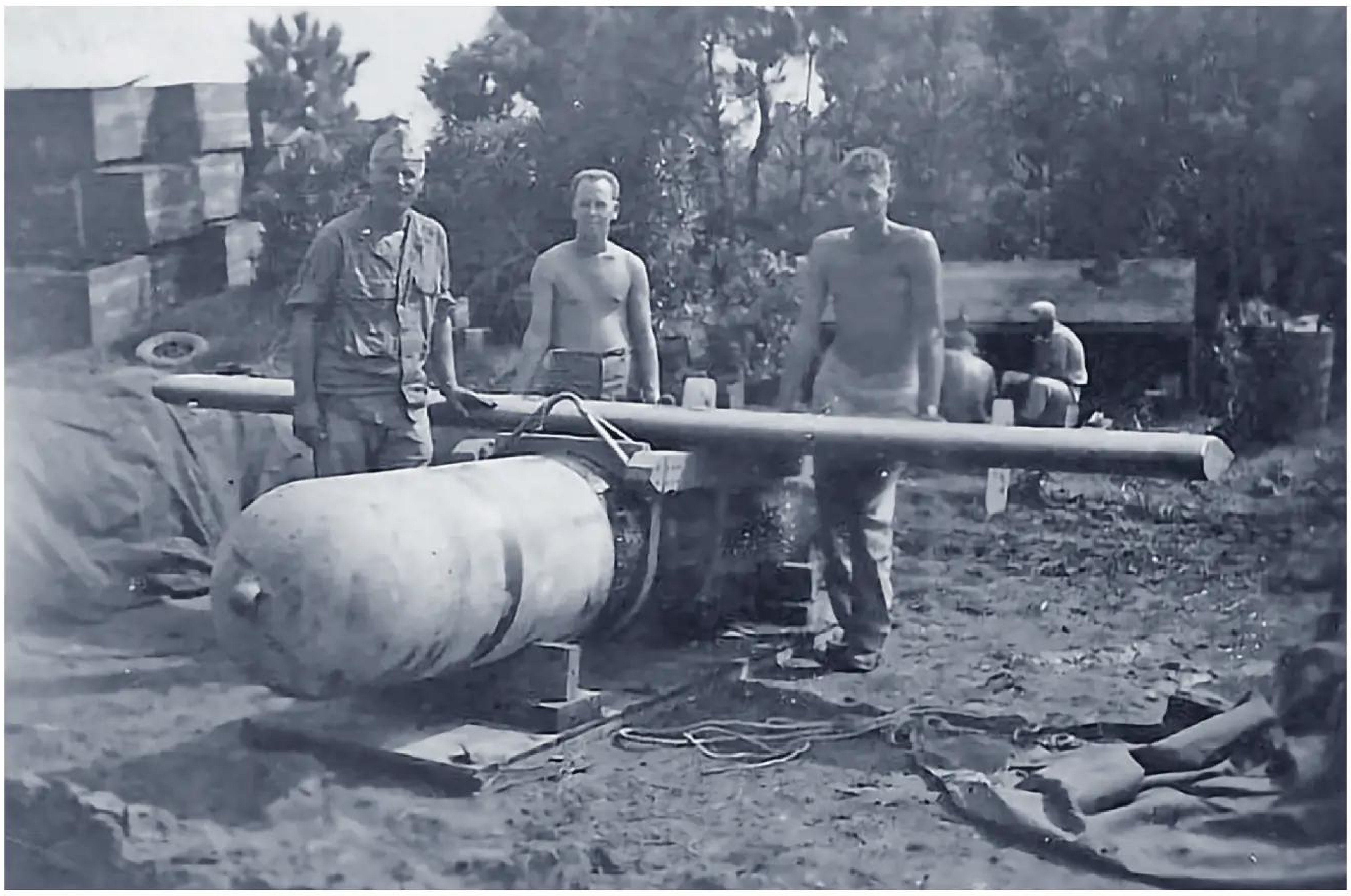
An early glide torpedo during testing.

41
BOMB
GROUR

Jacket insignia for the 41st Bomb Group.



Ground crewmen beginning to assemble the GT-1s for the raid on Nagasaki harbor.



The glide torpedoes were truly crude weapons.

the entire 7th Air Force Command in the Central Pacific.

On 20 November 1943, Tarawa Atoll in the Gilbert Islands was taken from the enemy and made into a USAAF base to be utilized to neutralize the balance of the Gilbert and Marshall chains of atolls. This procedure was followed the same way for Makin and Apemama Atolls in the Southern Gilbert chain. These were the first of the islands to be taken under a prior agreed "Island-Hopping" strategy that would eventually lead to the invasion of the Japanese Home Islands.

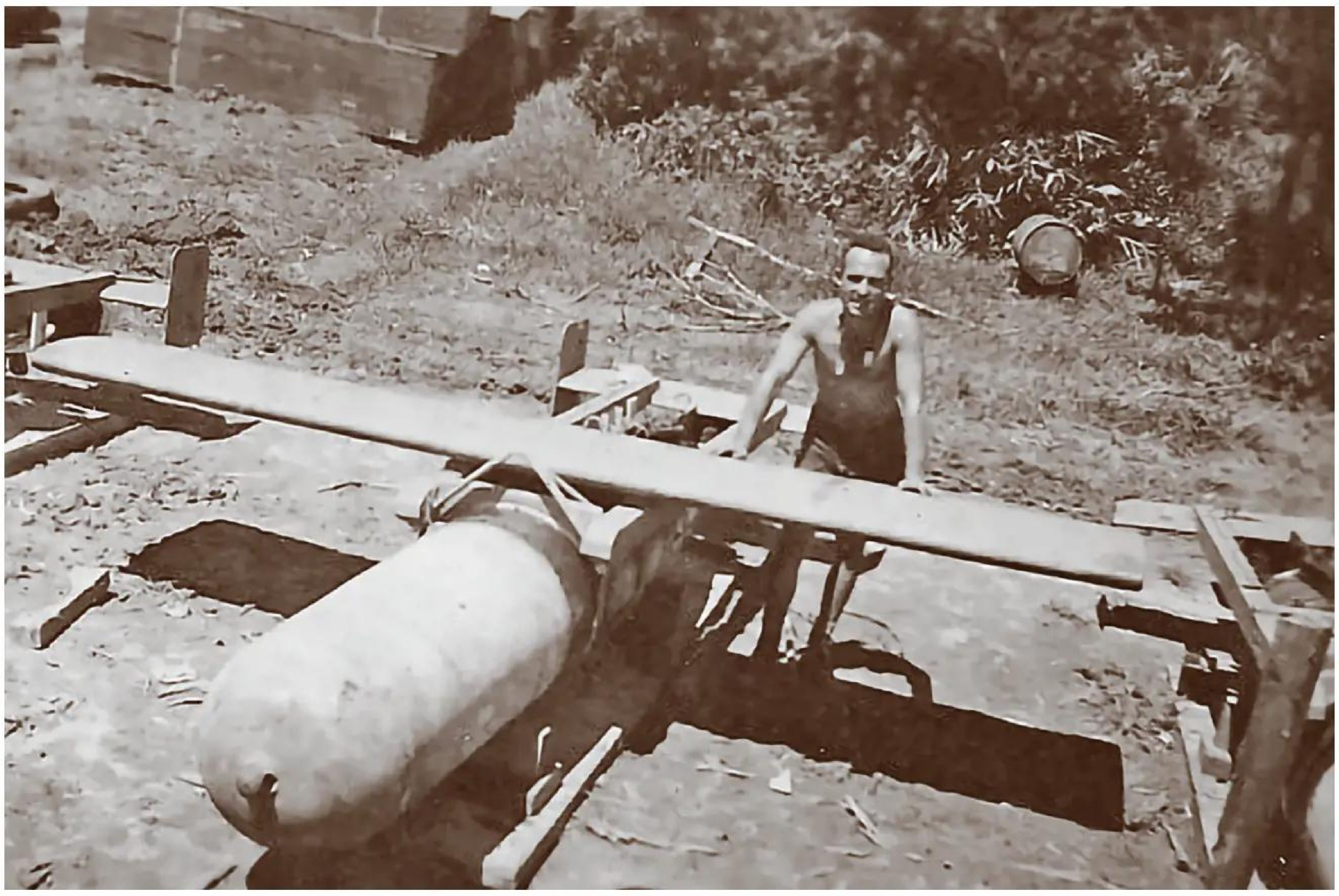
The plan as thus agreed upon differed from that of Gen. Douglas MacArthur who was adamant that he was going to take his Army up the Indonesian chain, retake the Philippines ("I shall return"), and launch an attack on the Japanese mainland from that location. But the USAAF and Navy plan agreed upon by CINCPAC in Hawaii would take the USAAF from the Gilberts through the Marshall Islands, the Caroline Islands, Saipan, Tinian, Guam, Okinawa, and then ready an assault on the Home Islands from Okinawa.

The one great worry — or flaw — in this island-hopping campaign, in its early stage, was the unknown naval strength of the Japanese. It was a constant fear of USAAF planners that the Japanese would amass an armada and then counter-attack and retake the captured islands. The USAAF had little training or equipment to resist a ground attack and therefore had little chance of resisting a strong Japanese naval assault to retake these atolls, which were really little more than "unsinkable aircraft carriers." It was feared that, while our Navy was engaging the Imperial Japanese Navy in the North Pacific and defending Hawaii, Midway, and other areas, the Japanese Army could mount an armada of lesser ships out of Rabaul, Palau, or the Philippines. Such a counter-attack could easily wipe out our USAAF holdings at these newly-taken atolls with a loss of all personnel and equipment. This was a special concern of Gen. Truman H. Landon and Lt. Gen. Millard F. Harmon, both of who were in attendance at the Washington Chief of Staffs' meeting.

When the Navy confirmed the practicality of such a torpedo attack to break up an armada of invasion transports, the order was issued to develop such a specialized squadron forthwith and give it number one priority.

In response to this order, Special Order 38, dated 7 February 1944, was issued directing eight prime combat-trained B-25 crews to proceed to Fort McDowell, San Francisco, via "rail transportation." The pilots of the crews selected were Lt. James L. McGrath, Lt. Richard V. Ramstack, Lt. Maurice E. Smith (myself), Lt. Everett Ross, Lt. Harry T. Courser, Lt. George L Tolbert, Lt. Richard R. Rondinelli, and Lt. David G. Fisher.

However, while these crews were in transit, Special Order 45 was issued amending Order 38 and directing the



Member of the 47th Bomb Squadron (M) with an assembled GT-1.

named crews to proceed to Eglin Field on temporary duty “for the purpose of special training” for 30 days. Upon arriving at Eglin Field, these eight crews were joined by another dozen crews hand-picked by Gen. Oliver H. Stout, commander of Greenville AAFB.

The 20 chosen crews were confined to a remote area of the huge Eglin Field complex, which we named “The Swamps.” We were further secreted by the issuance in a single extract paragraph of AAFPGC’s Special Order 48, dated 17 February 1944, placing us on “temporary duty” at that location but containing the notation, “This EXTRACT will not be published in the consolidated order.” This simple notation was considered as covert as possible at that time and thereafter all references to the unit were only designated as “Project 96525R.” The USAAF really did like all its paperwork.

Two of the original 20 crews did not make it to Eglin. The only found records merely show that on 25 March 1944, only 18 trained crews were returned to Hunter Field, Georgia, where we were issued factory-new B-25J Mitchells that had been modified at NAA’s Kansas City plant to carry the GT-1 weapon externally. This modification consisted principally of a simple bomb release mechanism externally mounted forward and aft of the balance fulcrum of the Mitchell to assure the weight and balance characteristics of the GT-1 and the aircraft, together with a release initiator to actuate the release mechanism.

After performance checks on the Mitchells, each B-25J and its respectively assigned crew departed Hunter Field on 9 April 1944 with a destination of the USAAF Service Depot at McClellan Field, Sacramento, California.

After performing extensive fuel consumption tests, we were transferred

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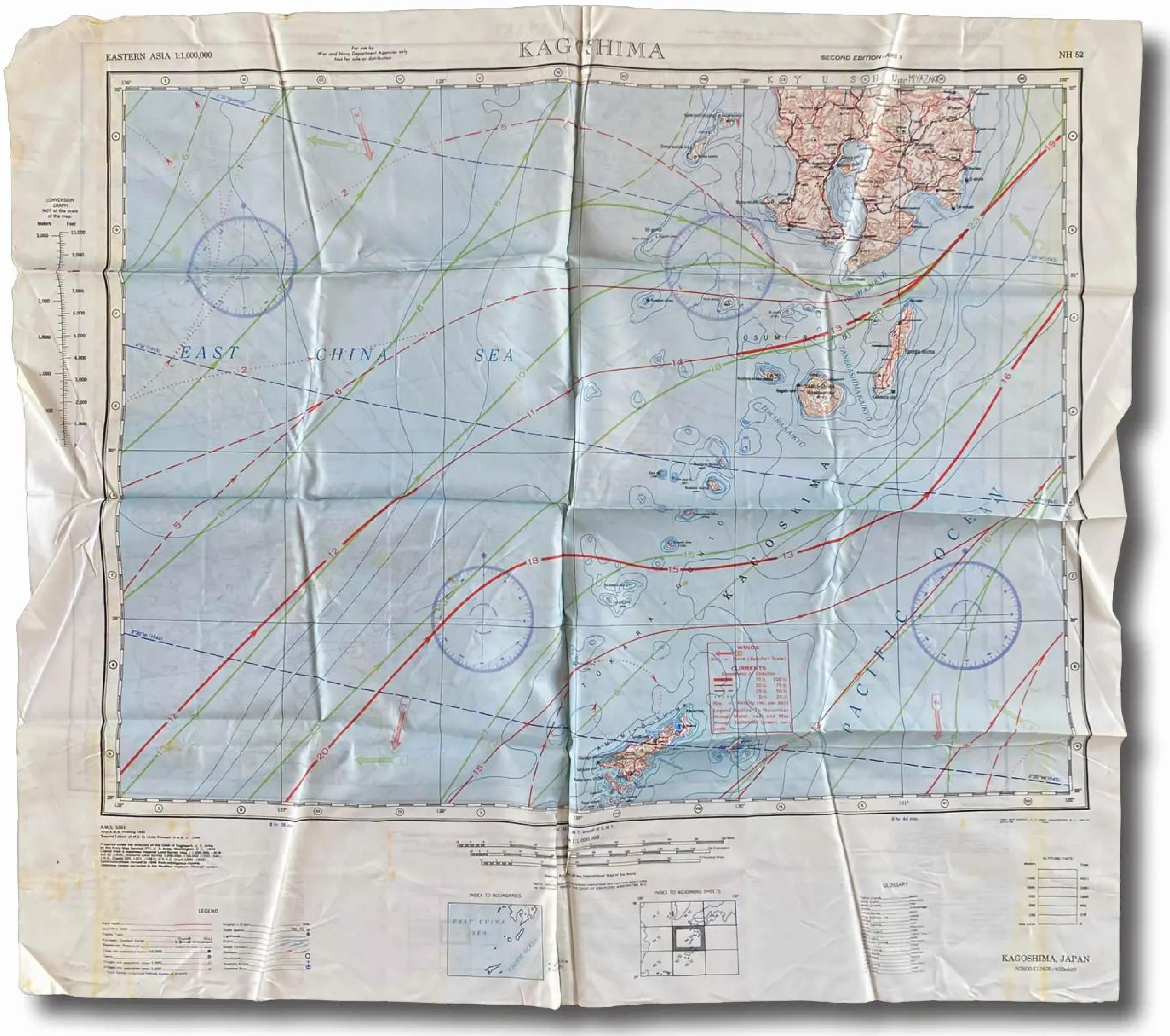


Silk "escape" map showing the approaches to Nagasaki harbor.

from McClellan to nearby Fairfield-Suisun AAFB on 25 April 1944 where a substitute navigator was assigned to each Mitchell for the flight to Hawaii as soon as favorable weather could be predicted. The weather did improve and commencing on 1 May 1944, the Mitchells of this little-known and novel project departed Fairfield-Suisun for the 2400-mile, 13-hour flight to Hickam Field. The sole designated assignment order for this transfer was an extract of Operations Order Number 92 from Fairfield-Suisun AAFB stating:

In accordance with para 17, so#96, dated 5 April 1944, Hdq. 3D USAAF Staging Wing, Hunter Field, the below listed Officers and EM will proceed in designated military aircraft in connection with Project 96525-R, Shipment FN-AN from Fairfield-Suisun AAFB to Hickam Field, reporting upon arrival to the COMMANDING GENERAL SEVENTH AIR FORCE for assignment to the 7th AF. This is a PC."

All of the above came much to the great surprise of the personnel of the 7th AF and VII Bomber Command. On further consultation with Gen. Harmon, however, as to the intended purpose of this mysterious unit, the surprise turned into intrigue. On 2 May 1944, all B-25Js were transferred to a small fighter strip on the eastern shore of the island of Oahu called Bellows Field. The unit was designated solely to be held there "for further orders," pending the placing of the unit in a strategic position to best provide this defensive protection from a Japanese counter-attack.

The Navy provided data that a Japanese counter-attack armada would probably be discovered at 500 miles from Tarawa or any other US-held atoll. Major Muri estimated that our 18 Mitchells, by repeated assaults, "could place a minimum of 75 to 80 torpedoes into the center of an invading armada" before the enemy could get within striking distance of the atoll. This was computed on a forward speed of 23 knots for the invading armada and a 160-knot average speed for our B-25s carrying the GT-1s. All three of these were considered as conservative estimates and were enthusiastically accepted by CINCPAC.

However, all these computations, all the defense strategy, and the original purpose of the unit all went awry — in "the best laid schemes of mice and men." The tide of the war with Japan had turned abruptly during this indecisive period at Bellows Field. The Japanese Navy had been defeated at Midway, the Solomon Island had been taken, and, combined with other naval and air victories, the fear of any form of Japanese counter-invasion had been pretty well eliminated. The enemy was now completely on the defensive.

The original defensive purposed of the B-25Js and their GT-1s had practically disappeared and the VII Bomb Command was confronted with what to do with this specialized unit. After numerous conferences, it was decided that the GT-1s could be used offensively to bring about great destruction of shipping concentrated at anchor in any heavily defended Japanese harbor.

One suggested target was the harbor at Rabaul, which often contained as many as 50 ships. The area was almost impenetrable by conventionally-dropped torpedoes because of heavy concentration of anti-aircraft units. Palau's Peleliu harbor, and other similar areas, also had thick concentrations of anti-aircraft weapons and the Japanese were skilled at using them. It was reasoned that a GT-1, set to circle in increasing concentric circles in a harbor until it struck a target, would be very effective. The GT-1 released at altitude and at a distance could penetrate the defenses effectively without the heavy losses of Mitchells that would be expected in a conventional attack on a heavily-fortified harbor.

Four officers made a presentation of this concept. They were Lt. Col. George Younger from the Bombardment Office of the Chief of the USAAF; a Capt. Atwood who was an Operations Officer of the Training Command at Eglin; a Lt. (jg) Hoover from the Navy who was a Torpedo Naval Ordinance Representative, and Maj. James P. Muri.

The concept of switching the purpose of the GT-1 from a defensive weapon to an attack weapon was sold by these four men and on 30 July 1944, VII Bomber Command Special Order 89 was issued assigning the 18 crews and aircraft to Col. Murray A. Bywater's 41st Bomb Group (M) and all aircraft and personnel were transferred from Bellows Field to Kahuku Field on the northern point of Oahu. The 41st commander decided to make the 18 aircraft unit part of its 47th Bomb Squadron and this was done on 9 August 1944.

Major Herbert Gartin was the CO of the 47th BS and he immediately wanted to send the new crews to Makin Atoll in the Gilberts. Commencing on 15 August 1944, the first two of six of the Torpedo Unit's crews flew to the forward echelon at Makin to participate in the neutralization of the Gilberts and Marshalls. The rest of the unit followed shortly thereafter as soon as the bombardiers could be trained as celestial navigators.

The Torpedo Unit crews fought as part of the 47th Bomb Squadron throughout the rest of the war — from the Gilberts, the Marshalls, the Carolines, the Marianas, and on to Okinawa. With the 47th BS and then-commander Maj. Novvel S. Wood, they became the very first bombers off Okinawa to raid the Japanese Home Islands and the first B-25s over Japan since the Doolittle Raid.

From atoll to atoll, island to island, and base to base, the Torpedo Unit carried, moved, shipped, and stood ready to release and deliver their GT-1s against the Japanese but no proper or realistic opportunity ever presented itself until just 13 days before the final surrender of the Japanese!

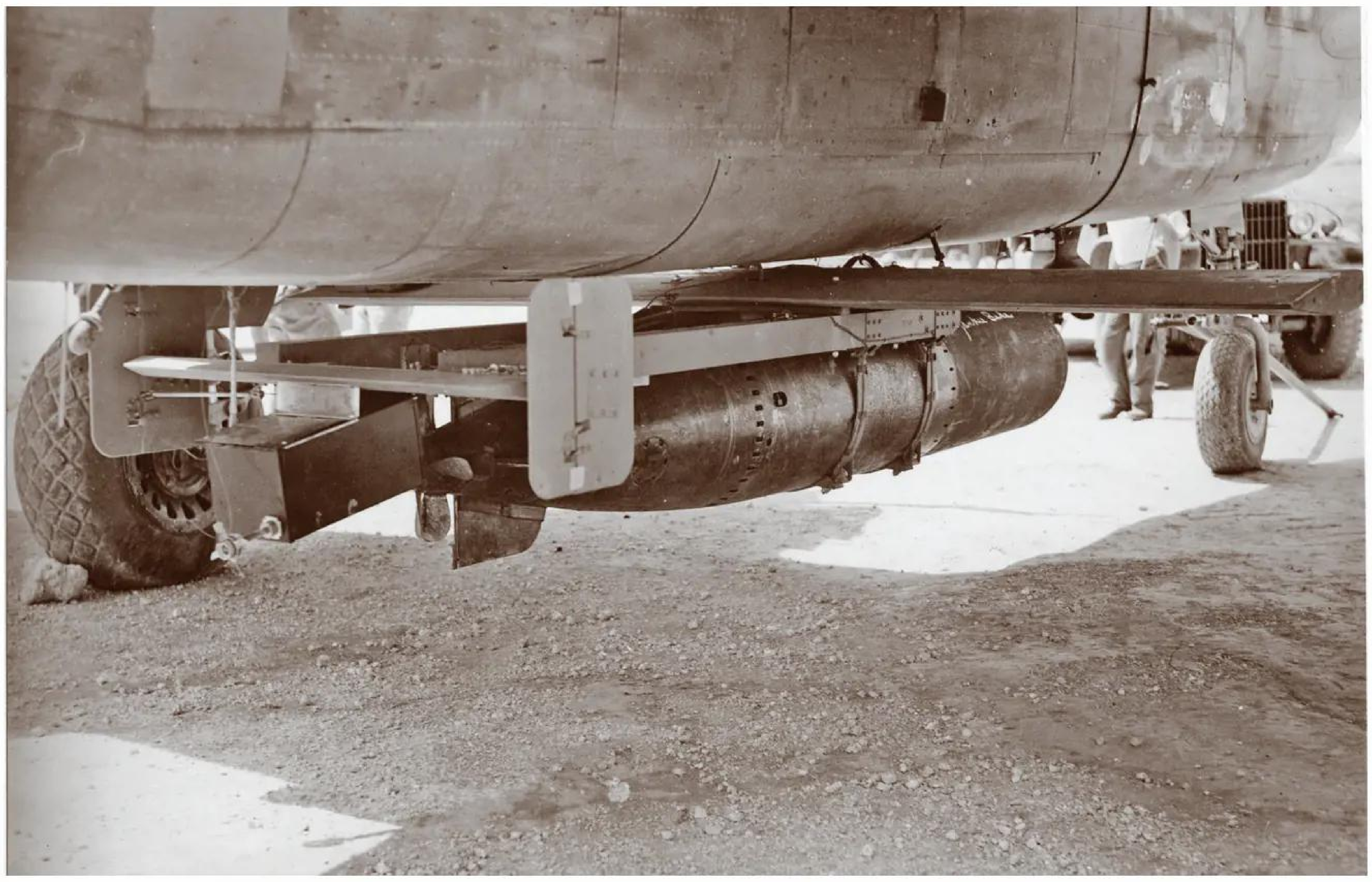
On 1 August 1945, the unit finally received a mission of great opportunity for the GT-1. Following a previous mission, three Japanese aircraft carriers were observed in Sasebo Bay, anchored in Nagasaki. Two of the carriers were full CVs. The other was a small CVL (determined in 1952 to be the *Kagamo*). After confirmation of the positions and review of aerial photos, it was determined that the GT-1s should be relased as close to the targets and as low as practical.

Since it was known that each ship was heavily protected from submarine attacks by two or three torpedo nets, it was decided that the gliders should strike their torpedoes in the water some 1000 feet short of each carrier with the weapons set to run straight ahead. This was to assure that the first three torpedoes of each flight would land outside the anti-torpedo nets and run forward to blow holes in the nets, thus allowing the rest of the GT-1s to travel through these ruptures in the nets and reach the carriers.

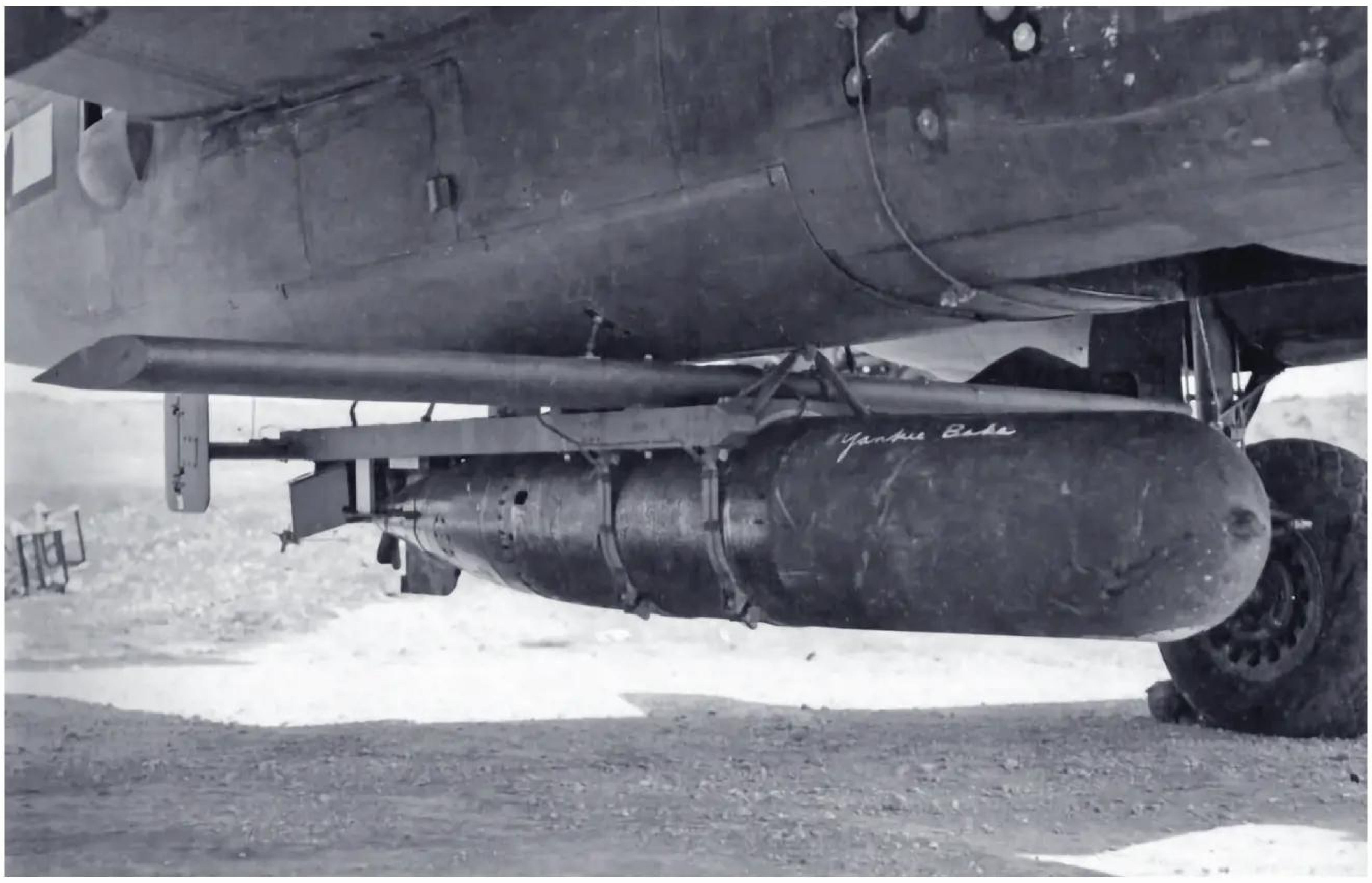
It was known that Nagasaki harbor was heavily protected with anti-aircraft emplacements combined with *flak* barrages. However, the mission soon changed and that, depending on wind variations, the GT-1s would be released at 6000 feet. At a glide ratio of 6 to 1, it would require a release of approximately 7.5 miles from the target to hit the 1000 feet short mark to make the run at the torpedo nets. This 7.5 mile drop range was believed to be well outside the harbor and thus outside the range of the enemy's guns.

The navigators puzzled and argued over the final calculations for hours and well into night of 31 July. The specialty crews also worked into the night as they made last minute changes to the GT-1s and B-25Js, setting the travel pattern of the torpedoes after they hit the water of Nagasaki harbor. The squadron had been raiding mainland Japan for well over a month and had raided Nagasaki twice, but this was like a "first-time" raid all over again and all of us were very anxious.

It was exactly 18 impatient months from 1 February 1944 that our 18 crews started training at Eglin until our mission date of 1 August 1945. During that time, our unique unit of men and aircraft and trained and waited, and waited, and waited for this opportunity. The entire 41st Bomb Group and 47th Bomb Squadron, in particular, was as nervous



Rear view of a GT-1 affixed to a B-25J shortly before the mission to Nagasaki harbor. Note the outlines from where the fuselage package guns have been removed.



Frontal view of a GT-1. The name *Yankee Baka* has been applied to the weapon. The flying surfaces and booms were built by Aeronca.

LUKi BETS **lifts off on its historic mission.**

to a man as were the torpedo crews.

At 0647 hours, 1 August 1945, the first of 13 GT-1-equipped Mitchells started its takeoff roll from Okinawa's Kadena Field with both Wright R-2600 radials howling. The 396-mile trip would be taken in a round-about fashion to approach Nagasaki harbor from the west in order to avoid the balance of the heavily-defended Sasebo Harbor to the north.

The transition flight from Okinawa to the western side of the Home Island of Kyushu was uneventfully made at 8500 feet as we flew loose formation. At the time, the US Navy and the USAAF squadrons at Ie Shima assured us that they had air supremacy and no enemy fighters of any consequence were expected or encountered.

The entire flight of 13 Mitchells commenced the approach to target from approximately 25 miles west of Sasebo Bay and then zeroed in on Nagasaki harbor at some 15 miles out. The lead flight of three B-25Js reported all systems were functioning and commenced a slow dive from 8500 to 6000 feet for the planned release. At 1017 hours, at 7.5 miles out, the first three of 13 GT-1s were released in trail from an altitude of 5800 feet. Each of the remaining ten aircraft closely followed and made their releases in a similar manner.

We began to receive anti-aircraft fire but this was less than on previous raids because of our approach from the west and, immediately after the drop, each Mitchell heavily banked into a 180 degree turn and none came nearer than seven miles from the target.

An extremely accurate burst of anti-aircraft fire hit one of the GT-1s at about 4000 feet and it blew up in a spectacular explosion as the ton of explosives detonated. It was later revealed that the Japanese believed they were under attack by some form of American *kamikaze*!

A return trip and aerial photos taken two days later on 3 August by the 384th Recon Squadron disclosed no sign of the ships on the surface of the harbor. Reports were made of fire and smoke in the area of the vessels on the day following the attack, but no true evaluation could be made at the time.

Four days later, the first atomic bomb was exploded over Hiroshima followed by a second over Nagasaki. In the confusion, the true damage to the vessels was never ascertained until much later. In 1948, one ship was discovered submerged in the Nagasaki harbor and, at the time, it was believed to have been sunk by the atomic bomb.

In 1952, the vessel was raised for salvage and it was discovered that it had been hit by two or more torpedoes, taken amidship. At the same time, the salvage project found the smaller vessel nearby. The salvage operation disclosed that this ship also bore several torpedo hits and was "probably" sunk by torpedoes rather than the atomic bomb. After the war, it was discovered that the *Kasegi* was about 84% complete when work was ordered stopped on 1 April 1945. The ship was in dry dock and it was scrapped in 1952.

Thus ended the saga of the "simple glide bomb with stabilization only" ordered by Gen. H.H. Arnold. The GT-1 was the only true glide torpedo produced and the only "flying torpedo" to sink an enemy ship. The conclusion of the war also saw the disbanding of the 108 men that flew and crewed the 18 Mitchells that carried the GT-1. They took the war directly to the Home Islands and returned safely to their own homeland. **AC**

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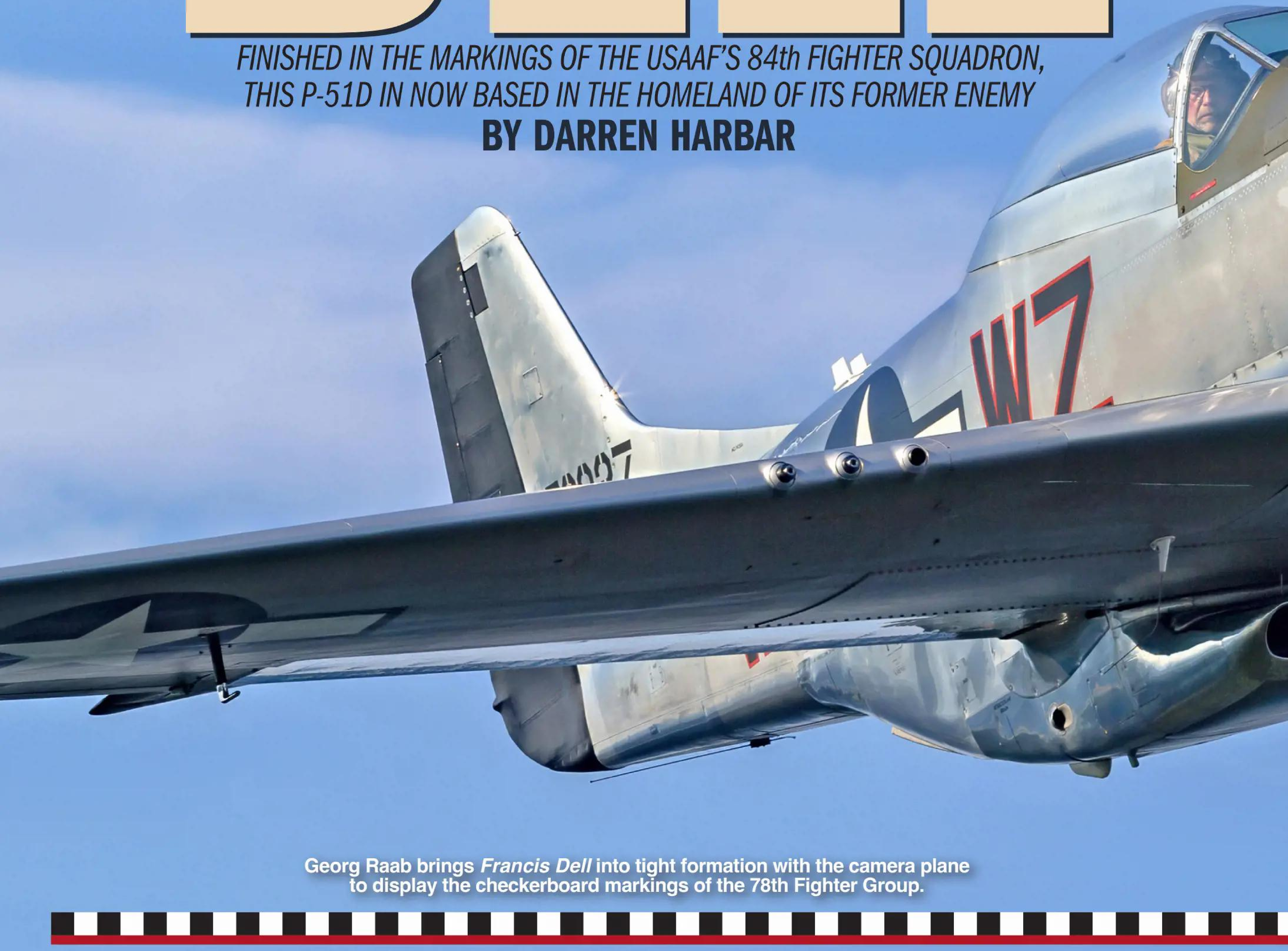
FINISHED IN THE MARKINGS OF THE USAAF'S 84th FIGHTER SQUADRON, THIS P-51D IN NOW BASED IN THE HOMELAND OF ITS FORMER ENEMY

BY DARREN HARBAR



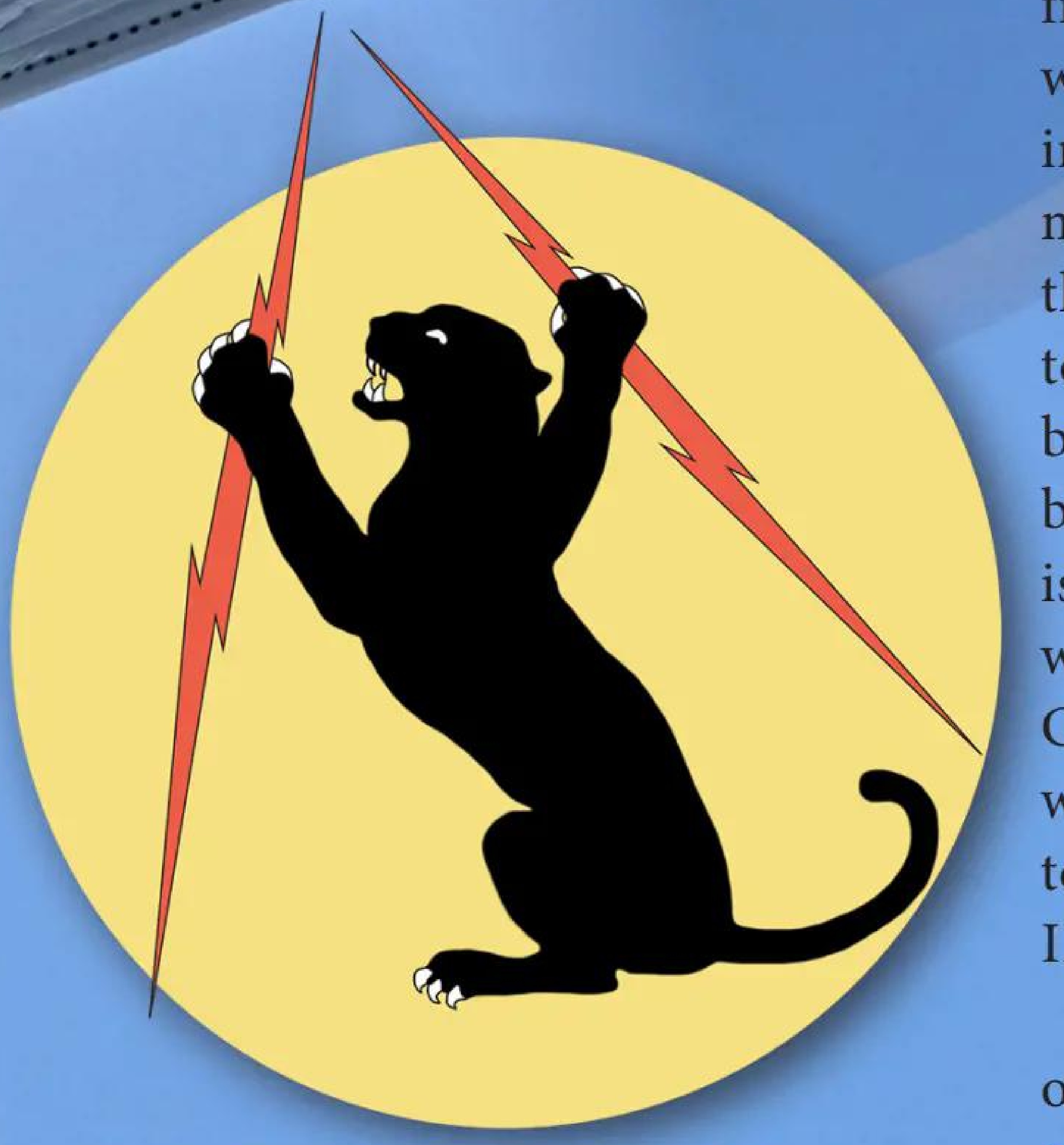
Georg Raab brings *Francis Dell* into tight formation with the camera plane to display the checkerboard markings of the 78th Fighter Group.

North American P-51 Mustangs painted in the distinctive colors of 84th Fighter Squadron, 78th Fighter Group (based at Duxford during WWII), are not an uncommon sight in Europe. *Big Beautiful Doll*, *Contrary Mary*, and *Twilight Tear* being recent Mustang restoration examples carrying the markings of the unit that sported a black and white checkerboard upon the cowling. Our subject Mustang sports the name *Frances Dell*, which was the personal mount of Lt. Clark W. Clemons who flew the plane during 1945. He had joined the USAAF and trained as a pilot before the age of 21, heading across the Atlantic on the RMS *Queen Elizabeth* at the end of 1944. Crossing the Atlantic at that time could be a hazardous task except for the fact that the elegant former ocean liner was fast and could outrun the U-Boats. Clemons arrived along with 15,000 other troops at Greenock in Scotland before heading south by train to Whittlesford Station near Duxford, where he and three other arrivals were trucked to the former Battle of Britain airfield. He was officially assigned to the 84th FS, 78th FG, on 15 February 1945. At this time, Duxford still was operating Republic P-47 Thunderbolts but the Mustangs were arriving in some number. Apparently, Clemons had two flights in the Thunderbolt before moving onto the Mustang.

Clemons was assigned P-51D USAAF 44-72927 as his personal aircraft and, as was common for American pilots, he named it as he felt fit. His chosen name was *Frances Dell* who was his girlfriend when he left the United States to join the 78th but, apparently, she had left him for another man by the time he had returned! His crew chief was Roman "Pollack" Poloanski who looked after the Mustang, but a team of three was normally responsible for turning the aircraft around each night so it was ready for the following day. Like many aircrew and groundcrew teams, the pair shared a good relationship, but Clemons knew who really "owned" the Mustang, especially after he scraped the rudder on one occasion and was suitably addressed by Pollock.

The unit was primarily tasked with bomber escort duties as the Americans ramped up operations following D-Day but, from time to time, they were engaged with also attacking ground targets. The introduction of Mustangs gave the 78th much longer range and meant and this meant they could offer protection to the bombers well into Germany, but they would break off when the bombing run was started. Clemons is on record for having said that he was startled that the brief once over Germany was to "just ride it out and watch those poor bastards," in relation to having to leave the bombers at the IP (Initial Point).

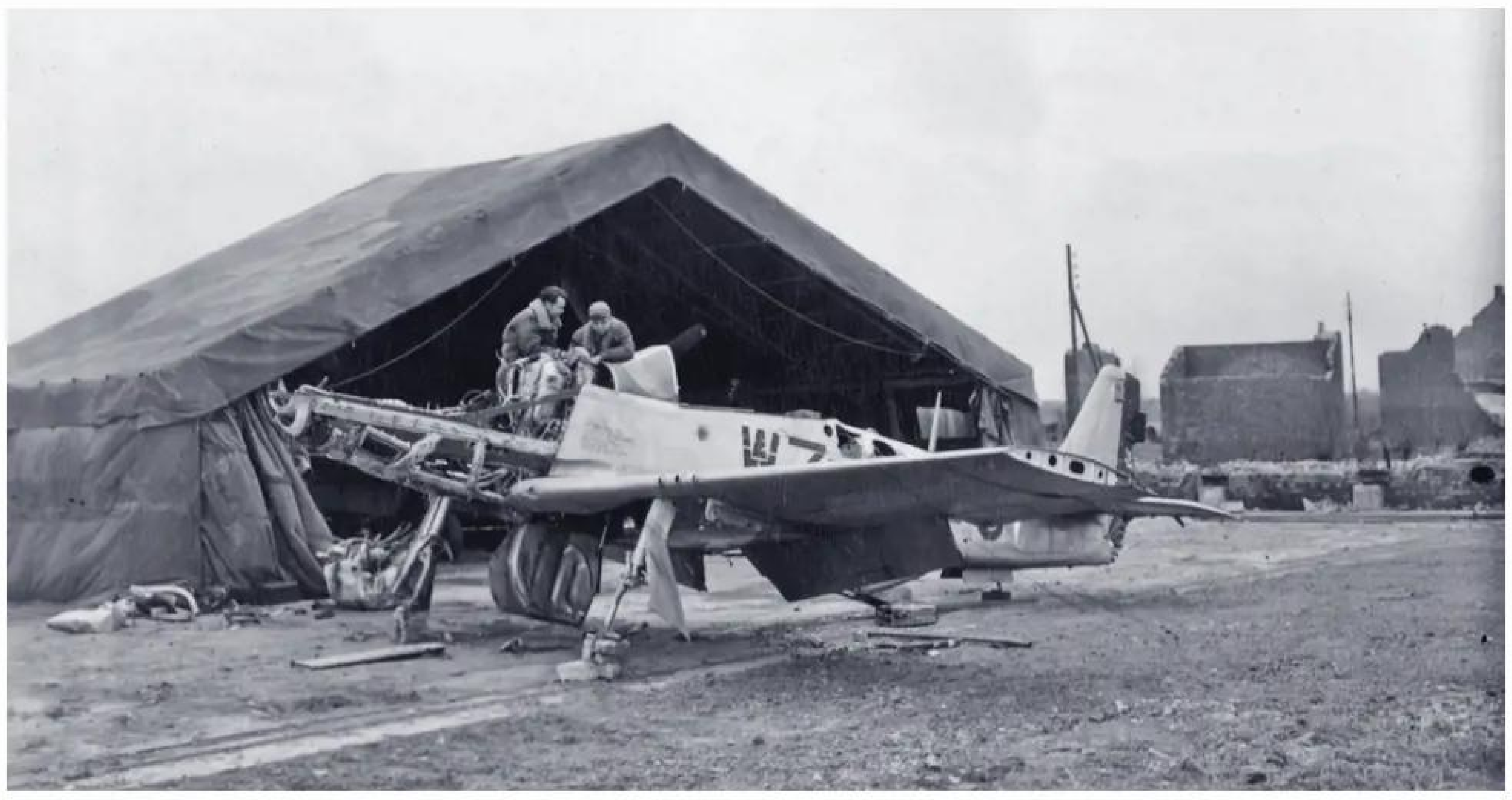
The opportunity to attack targets on the way home was not uncommon, and Clemons recalled he took part in strafing targets on the way back to



Flight jacket insignia for the 84th Fighter Squadron.

Frances Dell

Lieutenant Clark W. Clemons with *Francis Dell* shortly after being assigned the Mustang.



As with any other Mustang unit operating out of England, the attrition rate was high in the 84th FS. Damaged airframes were picked clean of parts to keep the rest of the force operational. P-51K-5-NT USAAF 44-11743/WZ*J was damaged in a ground accident at Duxford on 11 February 1945. This happened as it was parked with 44-11629/WZ*E and the two Mustangs were hit by 82nd FS P-51 44-11675/MX*N flown by Lt. Harry L. Roe who lost control and smacked into the parked aircraft. Rather than being repaired, 44-11743 was stripped of parts.

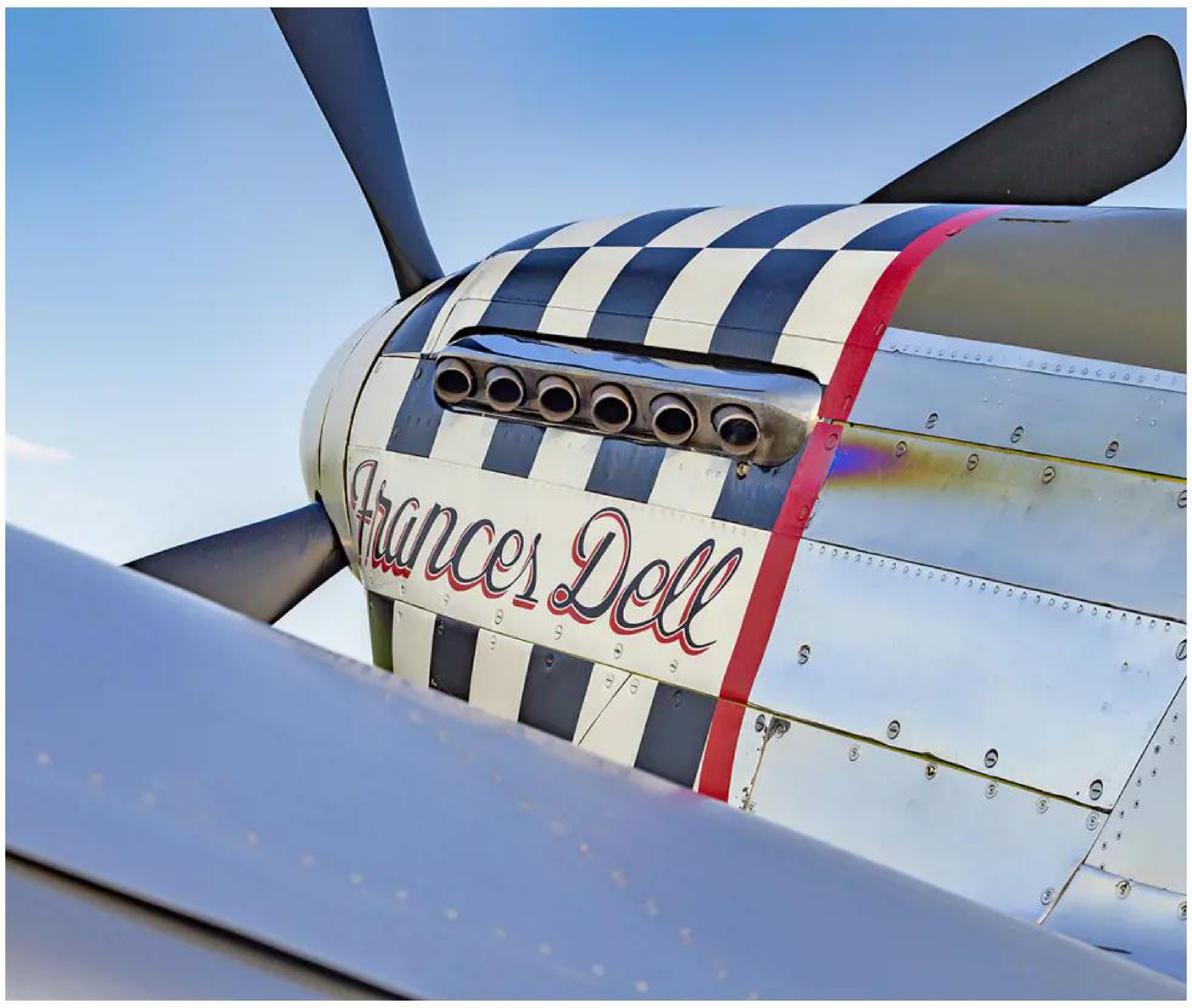
England, but he also reported the thrill of flying low-level over the tulip bulb fields of Holland and seeing supportive locals waving at them. During his relatively short time at Duxford in *Frances Dell*, Clemons completed 17 missions as part of the 78th FG's overall 450 missions. The unit departed Duxford in October 1945 and Clemons remained after this point as he was tasked with carrying out several ferry flights with P-51Ds to other units in Europe before he returned home to the United States in June 1946. He went on to be a senior flight instructor with United Airlines and passed away during March 2003.

Serving as a great memorial to Clemons and the men of the 78th, P-51D 44-74453 now wears the markings of *Frances Dell* as at Duxford in 1945. Built as a P-51D-30-NA at Inglewood in 1944, this aircraft did not actually see any wartime service, but was instead stored from 1944 until 1950. At this time, it was allocated to the Royal Canadian Air Force as RCAF 9597 with 443 (Auxiliary) "City of New Westminster" Squadron. The fighter served for nine years with the RCAF before heading into civilian hands, initially as N9150R when it became the property of Trans-Florida Aviation (to become Cavalier).

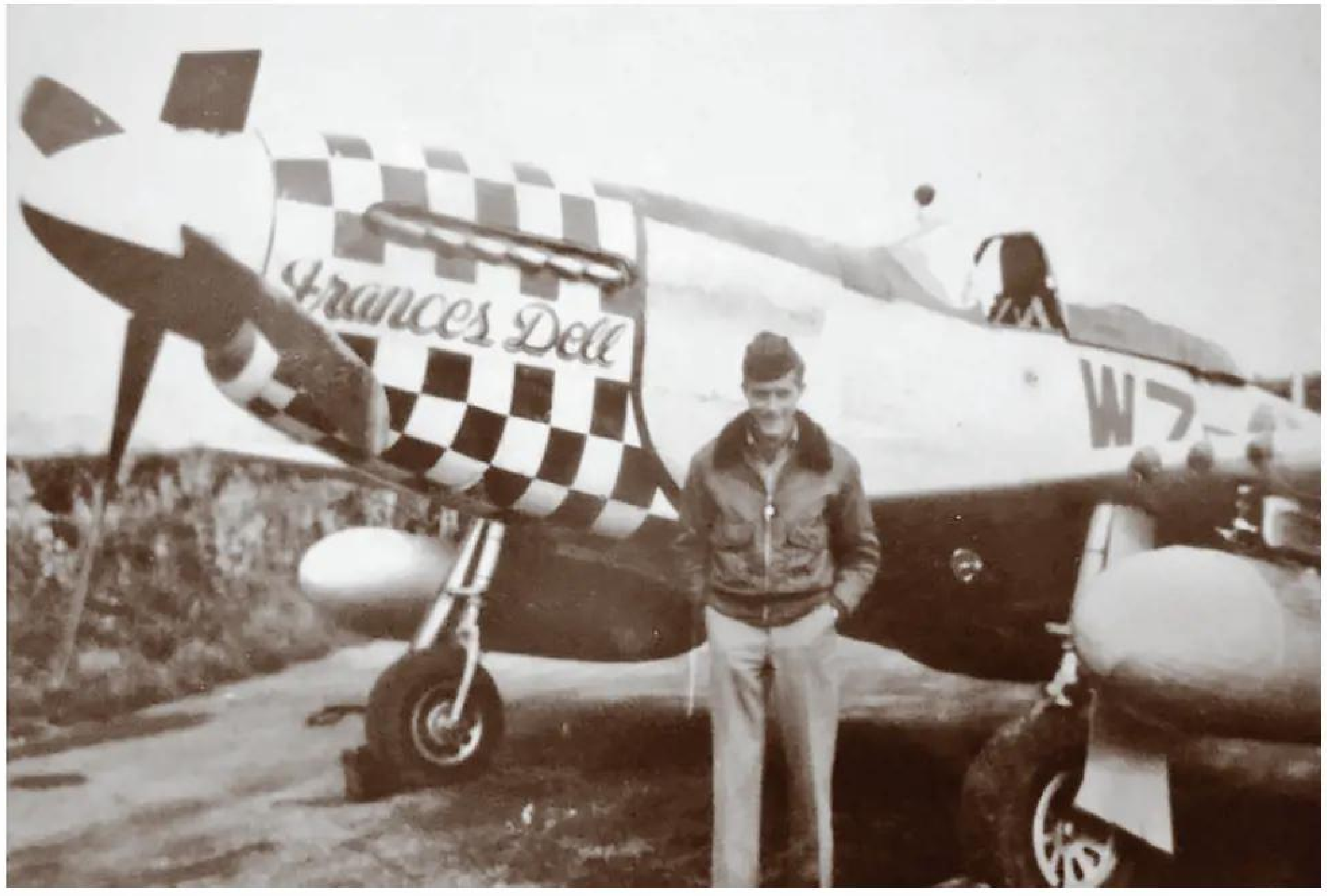
The P-51D was purchased from Trans-Florida by early Warbird pioneer E.D. Weiner who had the registration changed to N1335. Weiner always liked having "335" incorporated into the registrations of his aircraft and over the years he would own other Mustangs including N335 and N335J. The Mustang changed ownership multiple times between 1959 and 1963 when it was purchased by John Barker who apparently had little to no

WZ H
WZ X
472099
LITTLE CHIC

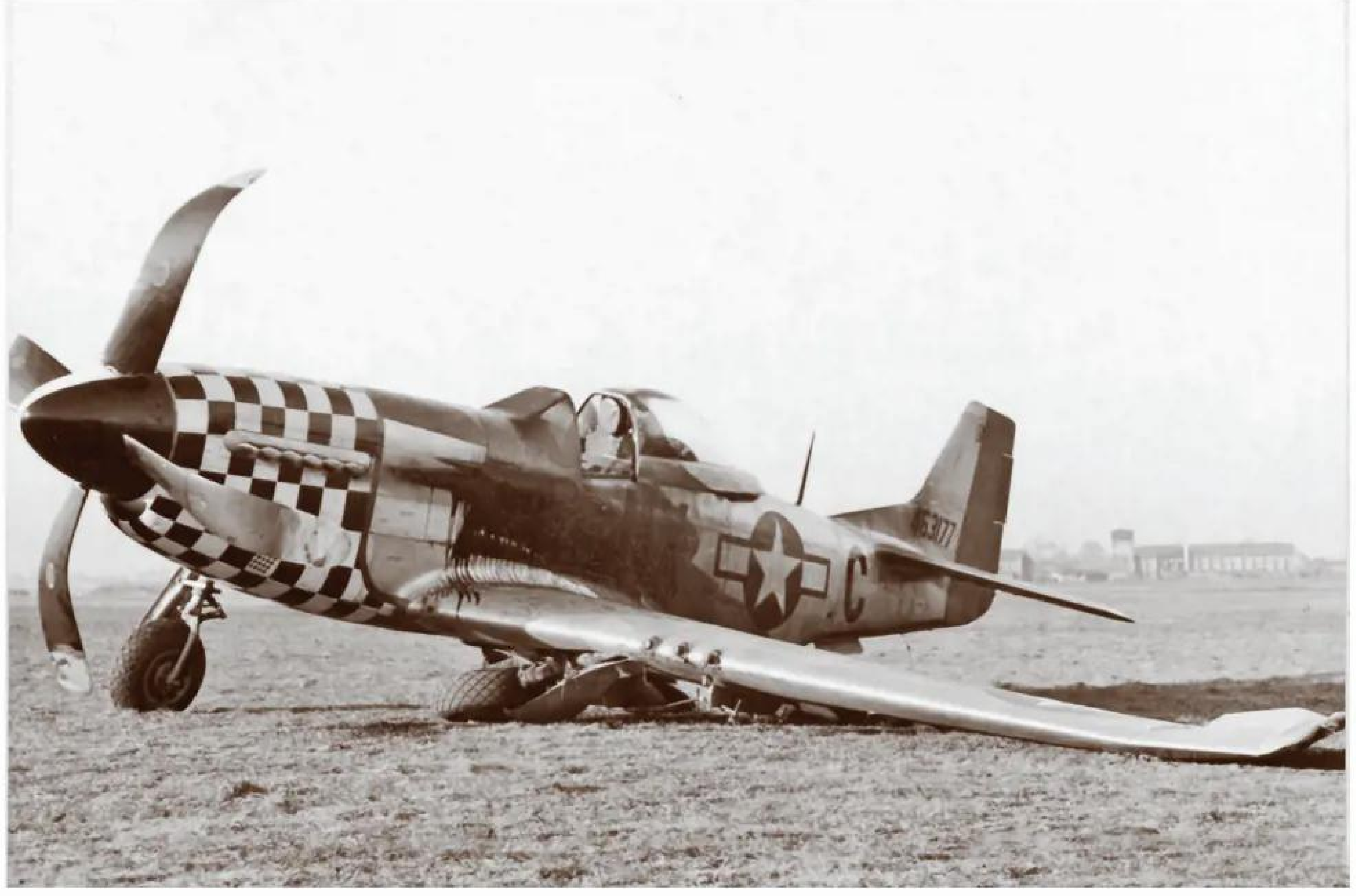
Mustangs of the 84th FS on the prowl. Nearest P-51D is 44-72099/WZ*X *Little Chic* while the wingman is 44-15731/WZ*H *Mischievous Nell*.



Detail of the nose art on *Francis Dell*.



Another view of Clemons with his Mustang. Note the red tape applied over the gun ports to keep dirt and debris out of the barrels of the .50-caliber Browning M2 machine guns. Also, the plane is fitted with the English-built "paper" long-range tanks. The original *Francis Dell* had the canopy frame painted either black or red.

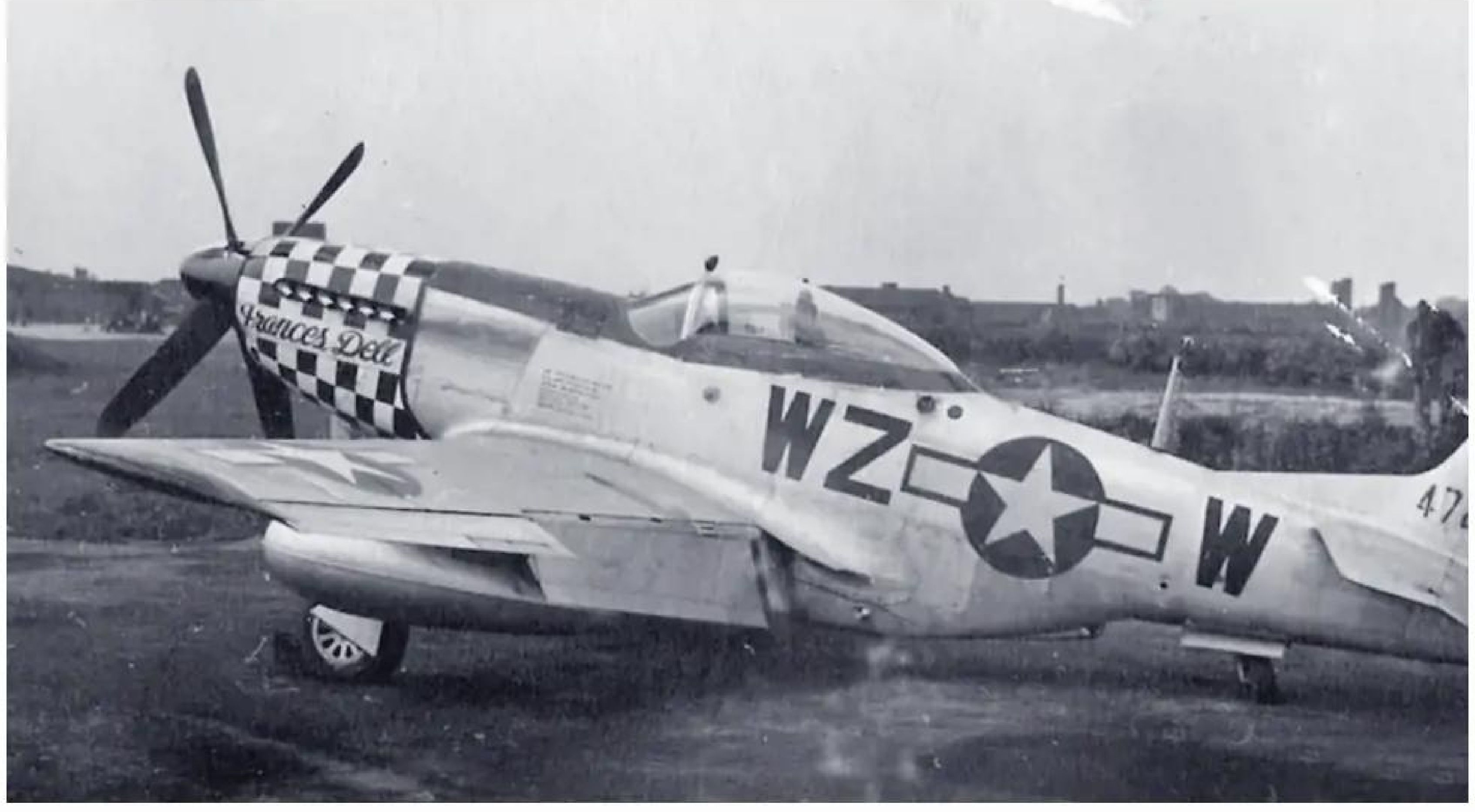

As with any other British-based Mustang unit, the accident rate for the 84th FS was high. Nursing his damaged Merlin back from a mission over Germany, Lt. Melvin Hoffman made it back to Duxford in 44-63177 but his windscreen and canopy were covered with oil and he ground-looped the fighter on landing.

Georg Raab after the completion of the photo flight.

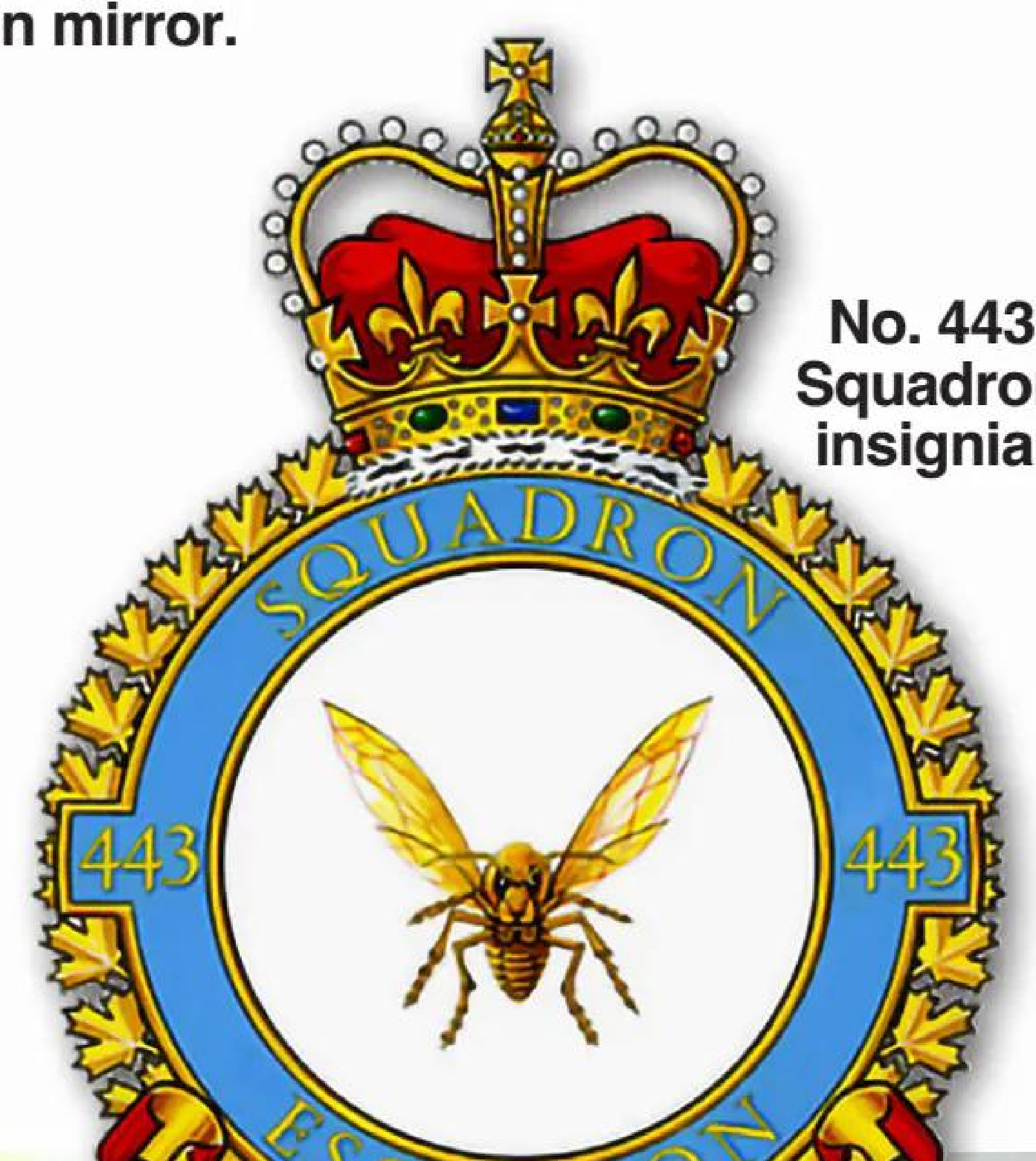
experience in high-performance ex-military fighters. Barker had owned the aircraft for just short of a month when on 17 March 1963, he lost control of the aircraft while operating from Wier Cook Airport in Indianapolis, Indiana. Barker got the plane upside down and it slid across the airport, killing himself and his passenger. By today's standards, the damage to the airframe was not that bad but in 1963 P-51s had minimal value. It appears that the plane was parted out and components scattered to the wind. Some wing components eventually even found their way to John Marlin's "sort-of" Martin Baker MB.2 replica that was being built in Reno, Nevada. The registration was cancelled by the FAA in 1970, and it wasn't until 1981 that the aircraft resurfaced when Bill Destefani from Bakersfield, California, had the cockpit section of the fuselage of N1335 behind his hangar. Utilizing parts from a number of wrecks including pieces from at least one ex-RAAF aircraft that he and Dave Zeuschel obtained in Australia, the project was given the bogus serial of 44-13903.

The Mustang project was sold and registered in Canada as C-GJCJ to former American football player Jerry Janes in 1987. It should be noted that two Mustangs were assigned this registration over time and this was basically a "package" aircraft assembled as a restoration project. It then travelled back onto the US register as N151JP when James Priebe of Findlay, Ohio, completed the aircraft and painted it as *Glamorous Jen* in 1989. Soon after, the aircraft was damaged in a landing accident after one gear leg failed to lower.

The Mustang was repaired and another change of ownership in 1993

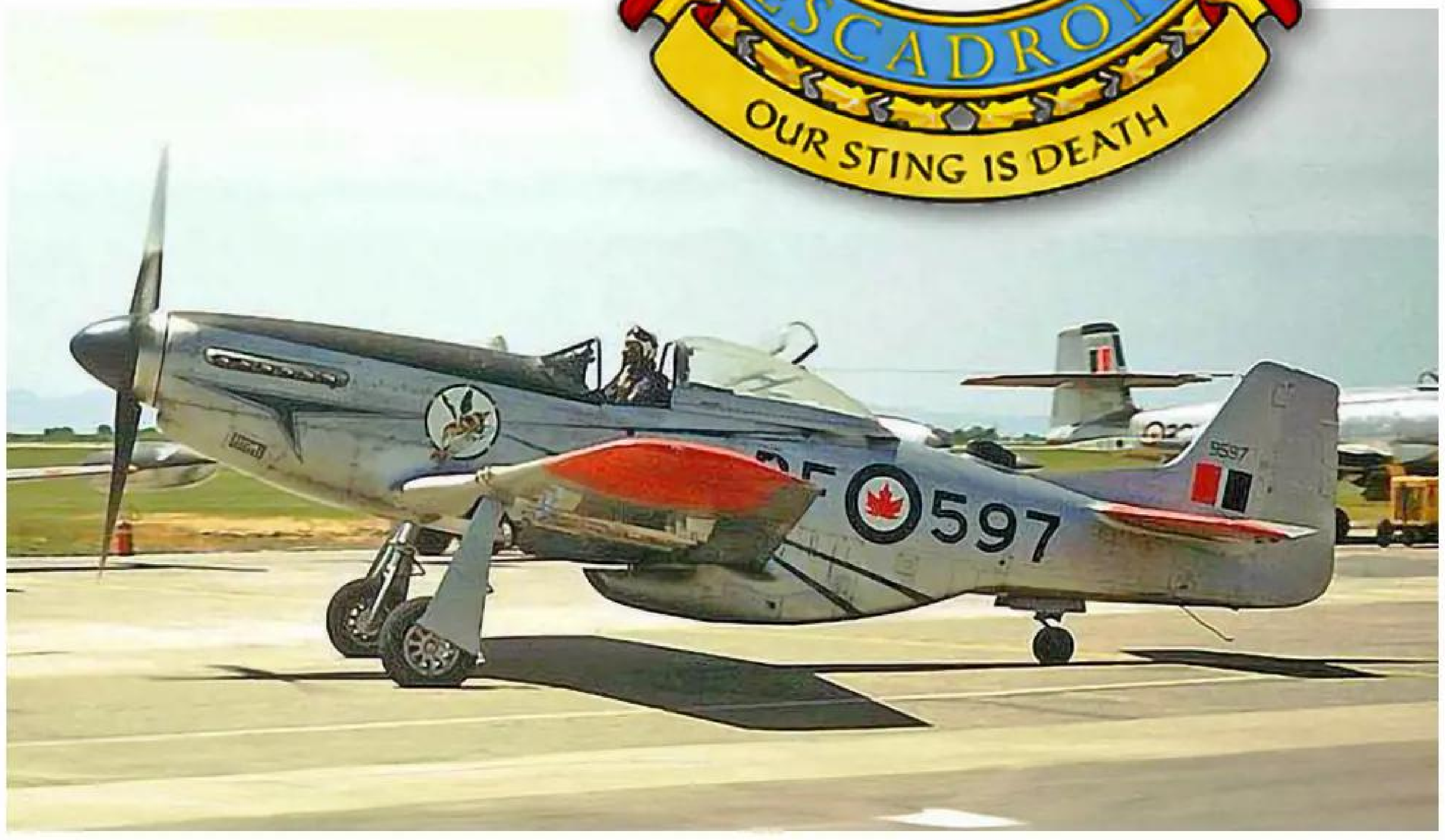


Markings carried by the 78th Fighter Group were some of the most distinctive in the ETO. Note how the original *Francis Dell* had the canopy frame painted — probably either red or black. As with many ETO Mustangs, the windscreen has been fitted with a Spitfire rear-vision mirror.

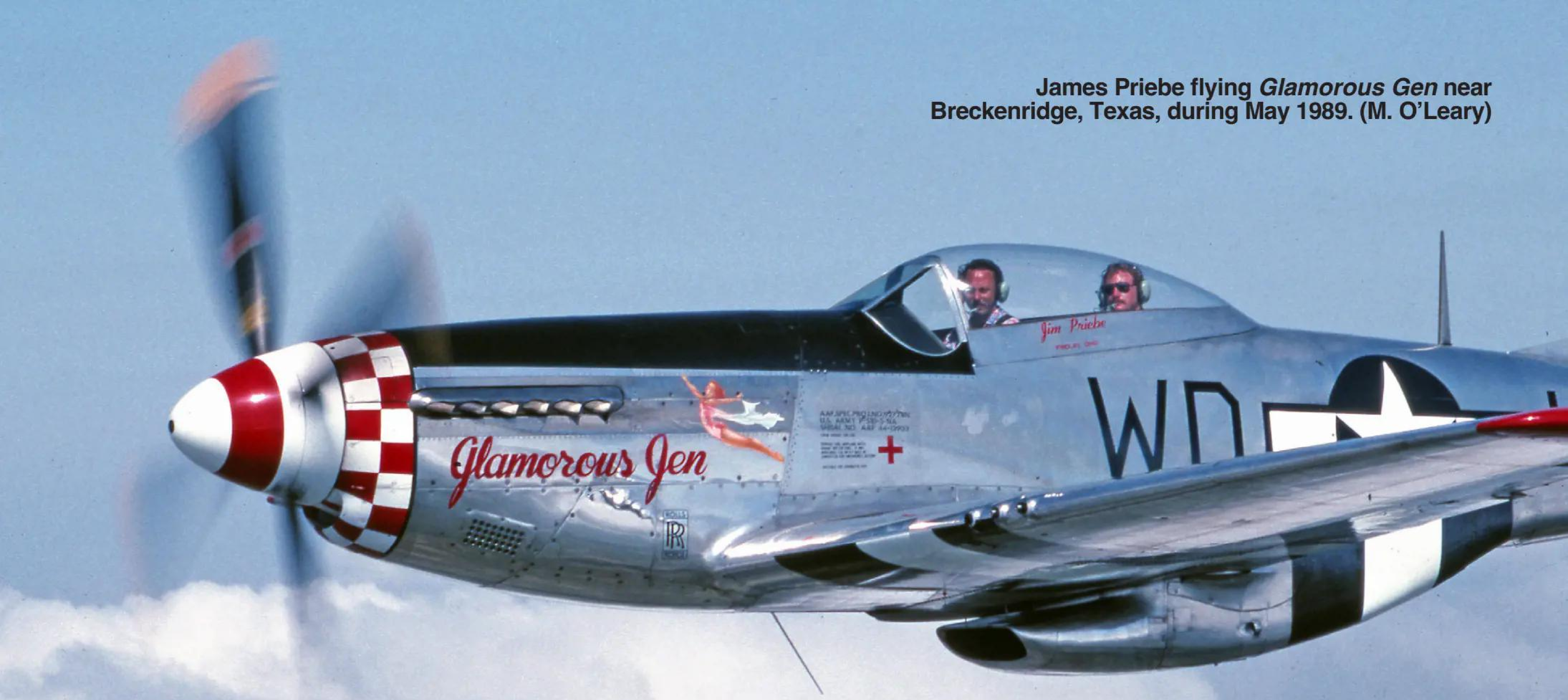


No. 443 Squadron insignia.

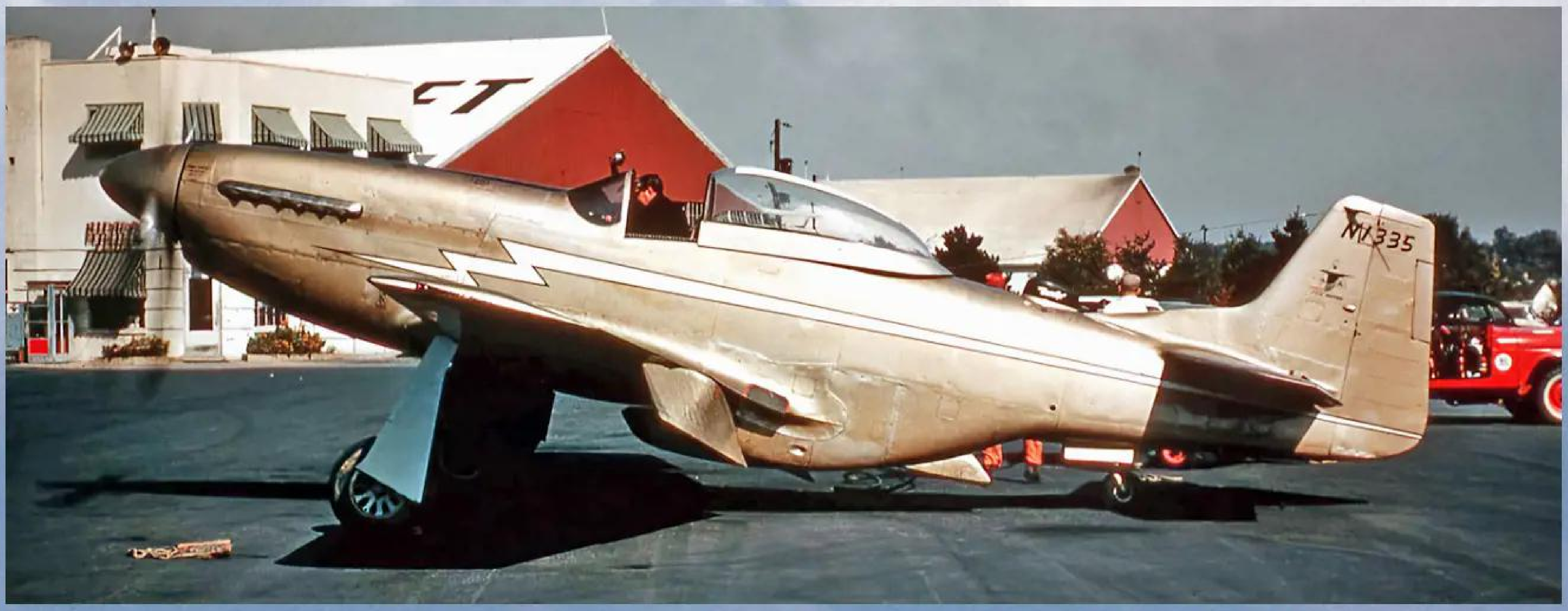
Mustangs of the RCAF's No. 443 "City of New Westminster" Squadron.



Our subject aircraft operating as RCAF 9597. When sold surplus, it was purchased by Trans-Florida Aviation as N9150R.



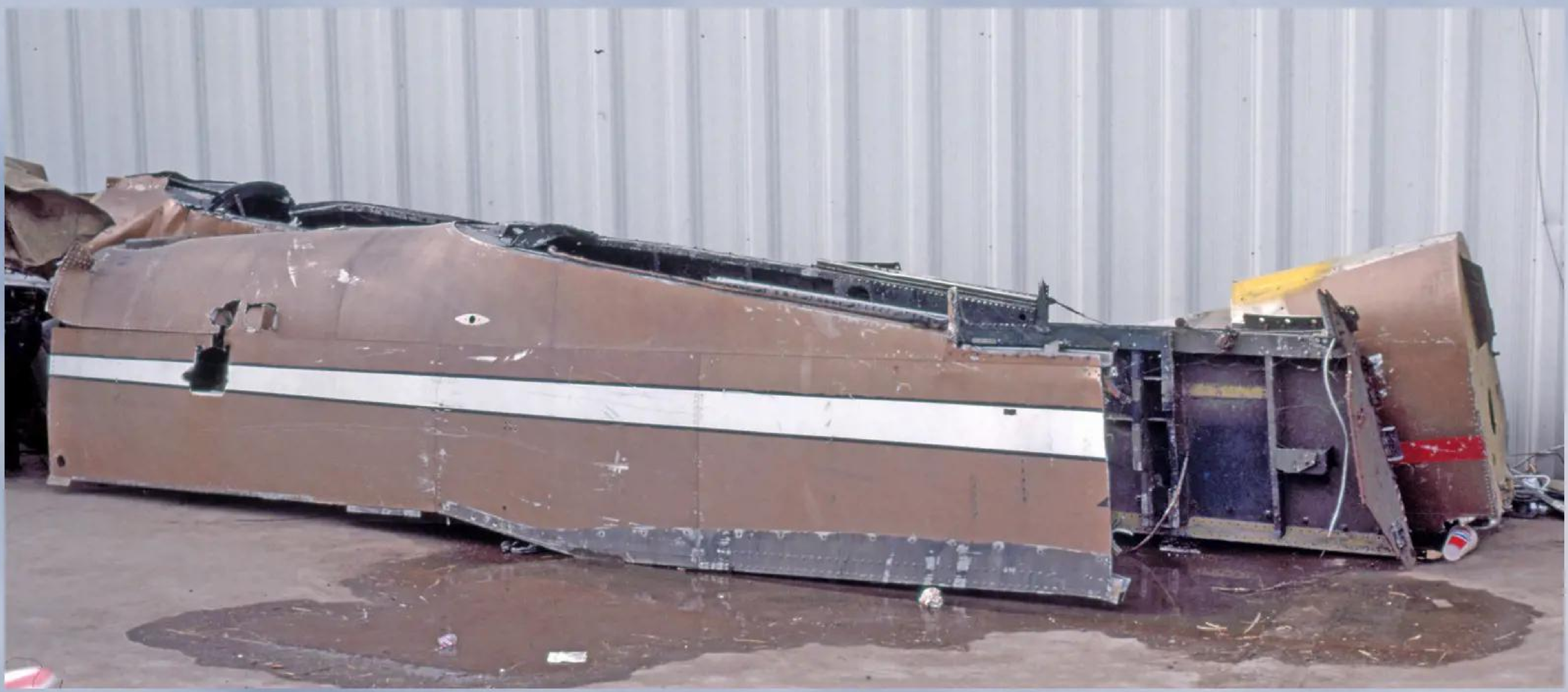
James Priebe flying *Glamorous Gen* near Breckenridge, Texas, during May 1989. (M. O'Leary)



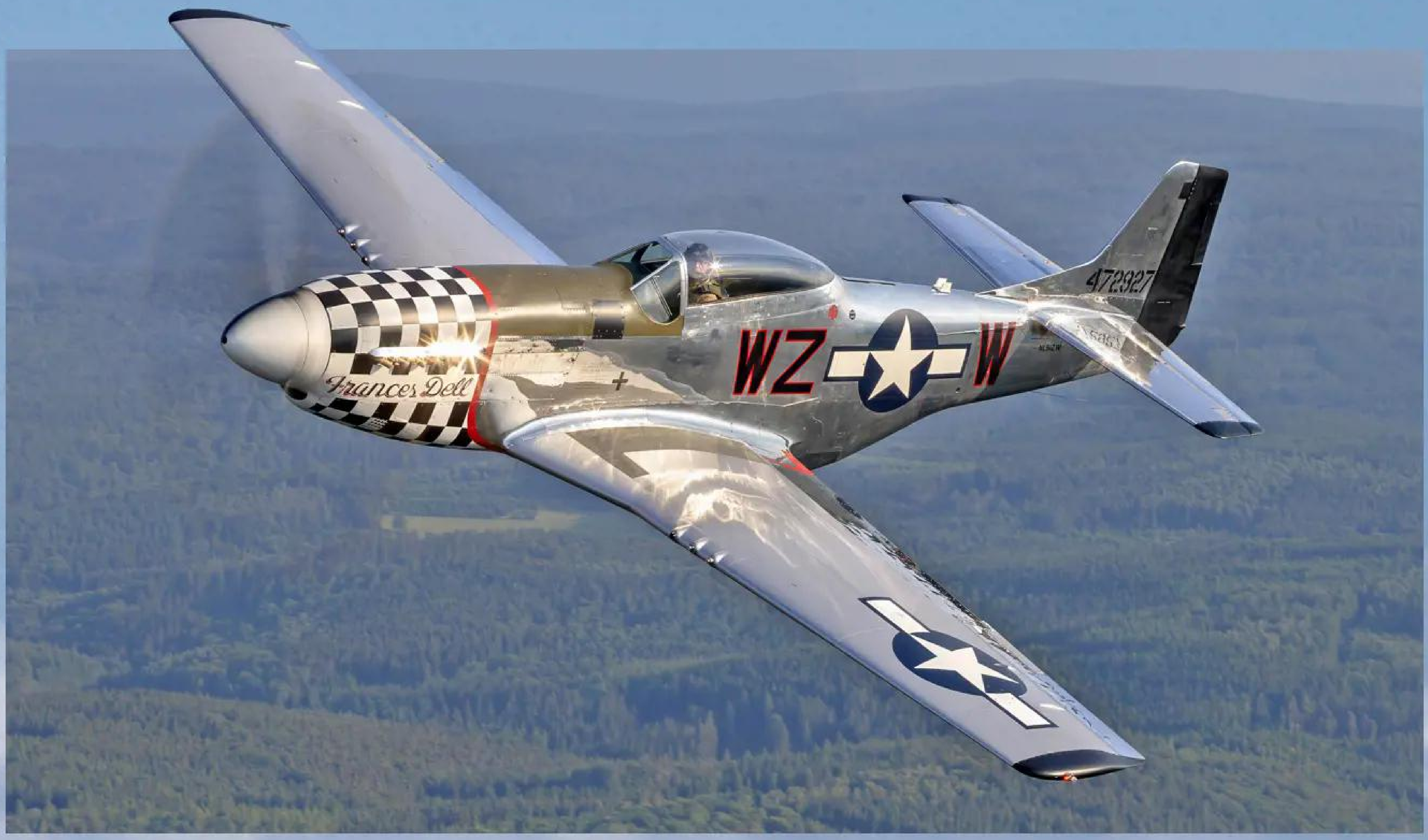
N1335 appearing fresh out of the paint shop in a gleaming gold scheme highlighted by a white lightning bolt. Note the white anti-sun stripe on top of the canopy — a common Trans-Florida addition. (Doug Fisher Collection)

Great photo of two USAF officers sitting in their Olds F-85 convertible as N1335 touches down. (Doug Fisher Collection)

saw 44-74453 registered to Howard Ross as N251HR and based in Chicago, before moving on once again in 2002 to Robert Baranaskas at Northpoint, New York. The plane's name was changed slightly to *Glamorous Gal* and the registration to N751RB. Matt Jackson installed basic dual controls in the back seat at his shop at Van Nuys Airport for Baranaskas. On 15 October 2011, the fighter experienced a landing accident when the right landing gear collapsed, which resulted in damage to the gear, right wing, prop, while also causing shock loading damage to the Merlin. The Mustang was sold and re-registered as N51ZW to Carl Patrick who dispatched the fighter to renowned P-51 restoration experts Midwest Aero in July 2012. The P-51D was to emerge in a highly polished finish as 44-72927 *Francis Dell*, sporting the 78th FS codes WZ*W and the famous checkerboard nose in October 2014. In 2019, the Mustang was awarded the best P-51 award at EAA AirVenture. (EDITOR'S NOTE: As most readers of *Air Classics* are aware, we try to present as detailed of histories as possible on our surviving



Becoming N1335, the Mustang did not last long with its new owner who managed to get the aircraft inverted upon landing, killing himself and his passenger. The sad remains of the fuselage center section were photographed behind Tiger Destefani's hangar at Shafter, California, during May 1983. Tiger had been collecting parts from wrecked Mustangs and the gold and red tail cone was from N5410V — which would eventually become the Super Unlimited *Dago Red*. (M. O'Leary)


Frances Dell
WZ W
472927

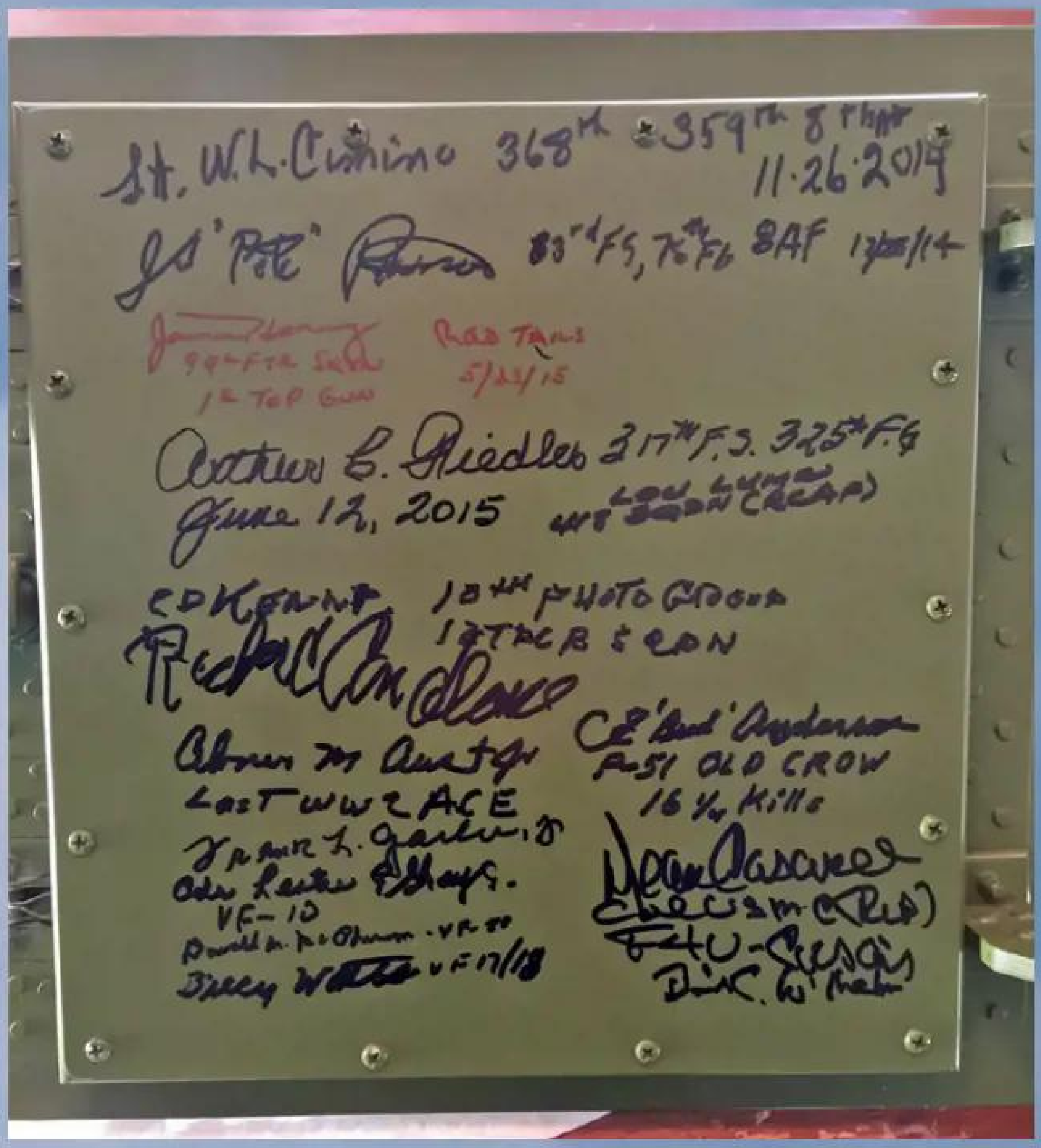
Georg Raab displaying *Francis Dell* over the German countryside.

Warbirds. As can be seen by the chain of ownership and various accidents that befell this aircraft, very little, if any, of the original airframe survives with the present aircraft.)

Having spent all its life in Canada and the United States, and now sporting a European theatre of operation paint scheme, 44-74453 was heading to the continent that the original *Francis Dell* once served over, as the aircraft was purchased by Georg Raab from Germany in March 2020 and he had her shipped to Meier Motors for assembly. Georg has always had a passion for aviation, having watched the USAF aviators over a fence at Hanau when he was child. He had started to fly gliders at age 14 and obtained a PPL in 1980. He then purchased his first classic aircraft in the form of a Boeing Stearman in 1998. A part share in a Harvard allowed Georg to build hours on a big engine tail dragger, before purchasing his Mustang.

Asking Georg why he decided to buy a Mustang, he was clear that it was something he'd wanted to do for some time. "The Mustang has been my dream aircraft since childhood" he said. "For me, it has always been synonymous as THE American fighter plane of the Second World War. Every single time I saw a Mustang, my eyes lit up. The performance of the Mustang, its appearance and the sound of the Rolls-Royce/Packard Merlin enchanted me from the very beginning. And this is still true for me."

Georg sought advice from Frederic Vormezeele when it came to learning to fly his American fighter. He explained, "I have known Frederic for many years, and he is a good aviator friend. Frederic has a lot of experience in handling, technology, and flying the P-51.


11·26·2019
83rd FS, 78th FG 8AF
94th FTR SQDN
1st TOP GUN
RED TAILS
5/22/15
Arthur E. Fiedler 317th F.S. 325th F.G
June 12, 2015
10th PHOTO GROUP
12th TAC R SQDN
LAST WW2 ACE
P-51 OLD CROW
16 1/4 Kills
VF-10

Many Mustang veterans have signed the inside of the non-standard fuselage baggage door.

The sterling silver wings belonging to Lt. Col. Clemons are mounted in the cockpit of *Francis Dell*.

After each flight, *Francis Dell* is carefully cleaned and polished.

472927
W
WZ
NL51ZW

Georg going aloft for a flight in his Stearman. He has over 1000 flying hours in the aircraft.

And he is a certified flight instructor. It was, therefore, obvious for me to do the checkout training with him in his two-seat TF-51D *Scat VII* in Belgium, along with my friend and fellow pilot Florian Hose who now also flies *Frances Dell*. It was a fantastic flying experience," says Georg.

Georg now has almost 1000 hours of experience on the Boeing Stearman and 350 hours on the Harvard. He explained that "it was not too difficult to master the Mustang in terms of flying the aircraft. The challenge for me was more to understand and analyse the systems of the aircraft." He went on to explain that "Florian and I still have a lot of respect for the Rolls Royce Merlin. Each time the engine is started, the pulse rate increases. We prefer to start a "cold" engine. If the engine is warm, it can be tricky, and both of us have a hell of a respect for potential stack fire, which can occur if too much fuel is supplied to the carburator."

As with many owners. Georg considers himself a custodian, rather than owner and he's quick to say that "having a North American P-51 is not just a matter of owning it. It is a mission for the present and the future. Aircraft from the Second World War, and especially aircraft such as the Mustang, bear witness to an era that shaped and changed the world. The number of these aircraft cannot be increased arbitrarily. That is why the existing aircraft are treasures that must be

Glamorous Gal

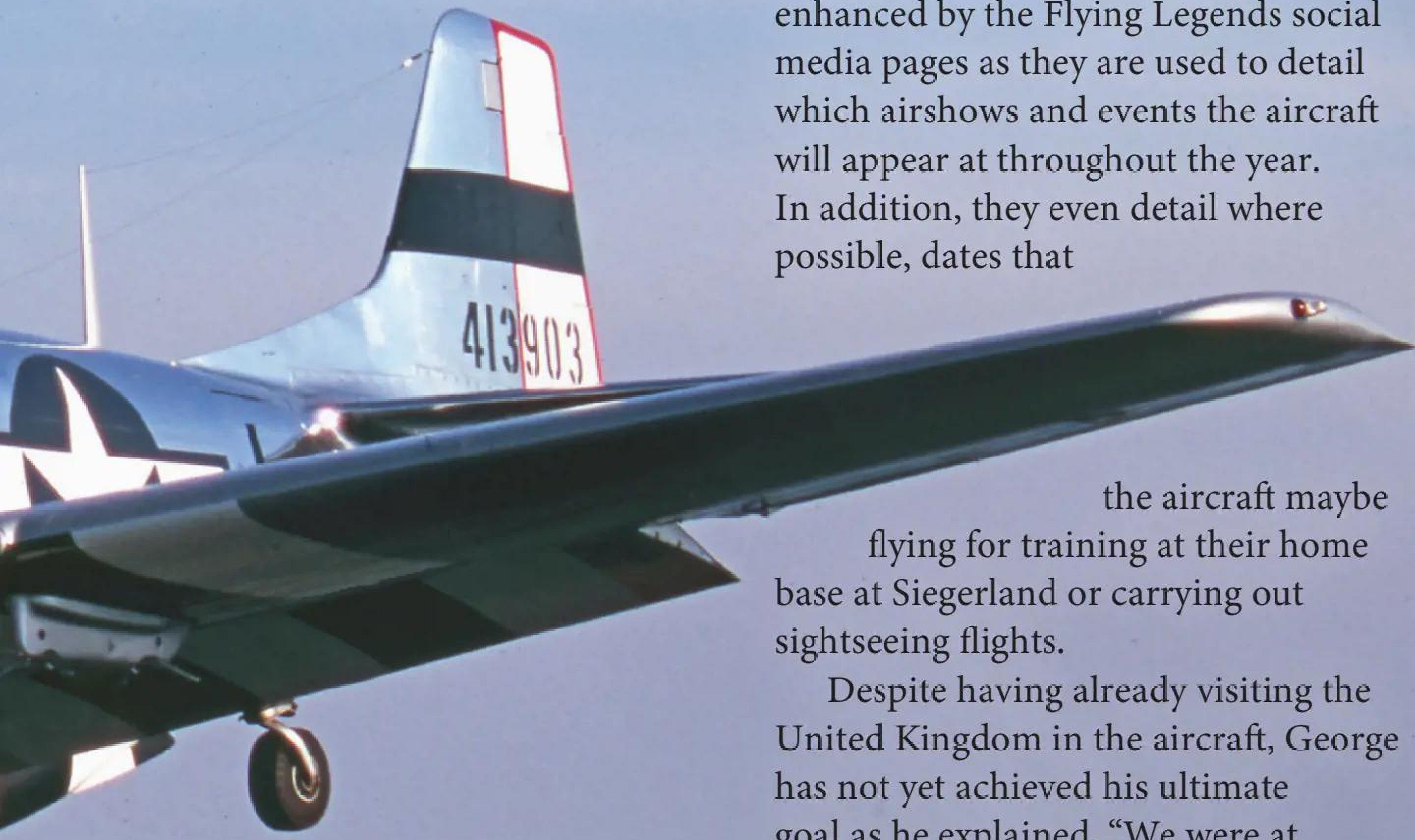
The Mustang when owned by Robert Baranaskas and named *Glamorous Gal* with registration N751RB. The aircraft was being flown by his son Chris near Willow Run, Michigan, who was displaying the Mustang in landing configuration on 5 August 2006. Sadly, Robert Baranaskas died when his P-40E crashed into the Atlantic Ocean on 5 April 2009 while he was practicing an aerobatic routine.

A golden German summer is highlighted by the setting sun as the sound of the Merlin reverberates over the German countryside.

Glamorous Gal on display during the Mustang Gathering at Kissimmee, Florida, on 13 April 1999.

preserved. Today, the owners and pilots of these aircraft are caretakers for a certain period of time. Our task is to keep these treasures in good condition, to care for them but also to fly them. We have to show the interested public what great engineering is involved in these aircraft, which are now 80 to 90 years old or even older." With this in mind, Georg wants his aircraft to be seen in public and he feels it is a great pleasure to fly his aerobatic displays in *Frances Dell* at airshows.

He describes the display experience as, "It is a poem with what ease the plane goes through all the aerobatic maneuvers and you've really got the feeling that she really enjoys the show." The desire to share this wonderful Mustang is further enhanced by the Flying Legends social media pages as they are used to detail which airshows and events the aircraft will appear at throughout the year. In addition, they even detail where possible, dates that the aircraft maybe flying for training at their home base at Siegerland or carrying out sightseeing flights.



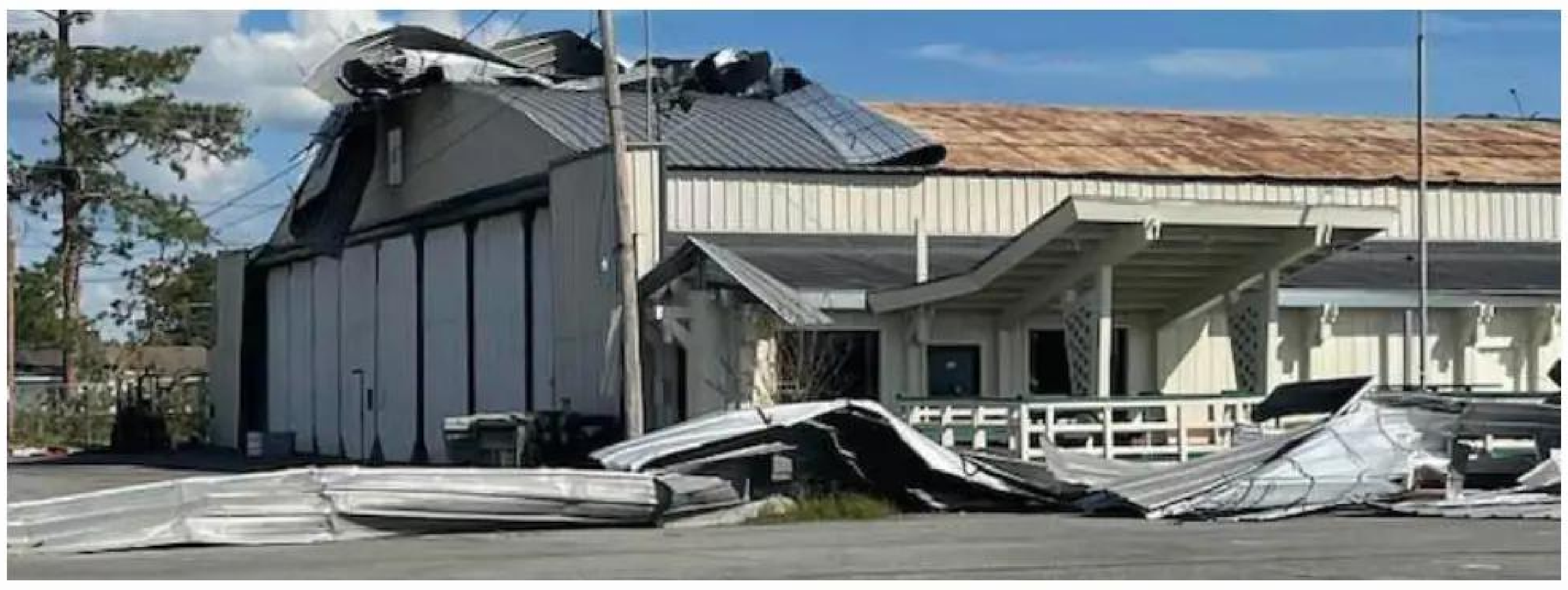
Despite having already visiting the United Kingdom in the aircraft, George has not yet achieved his ultimate goal as he explained, "We were at RAF Fairford for the International Air Tattoo last year with *Frances Dell* and were there again this year, but, unfortunately, only in static display. I hope this will change on further visits to Fairford, but, of course, a real wish is to be able to be part of one of the big events in Duxford and to fly an aerobatic display there. It would be the 'homecoming' of *Frances Dell* to Duxford, and this will be another big moment for me."

It's great to see how much Georg enjoys his aircraft and that the Mustang is well-cared for. It's hand polished after every flight and alongside his dedicated team of enthusiastic volunteers, Georg keeps *Frances Dell* in wonderful condition for all to enjoy. The fighter carries the original pilot wings of Lt. Col. Clark W. Clemons in the rear cockpit, as installed by Carl Patrick following the restoration by Midwest Aero and it also has the signatures of several Mustang veterans on the inside of the non-standard fuselage cargo door — little details on a little friend that show great significance as a memorial to those who served with the 8th Air Force in Europe. **AC**

OVERLEAF: Photo mission over, Georg Raab "wheels" *Francis Dell* on to the grass runway.

472927
W
WZ
NL51ZW

(continued from page 18)

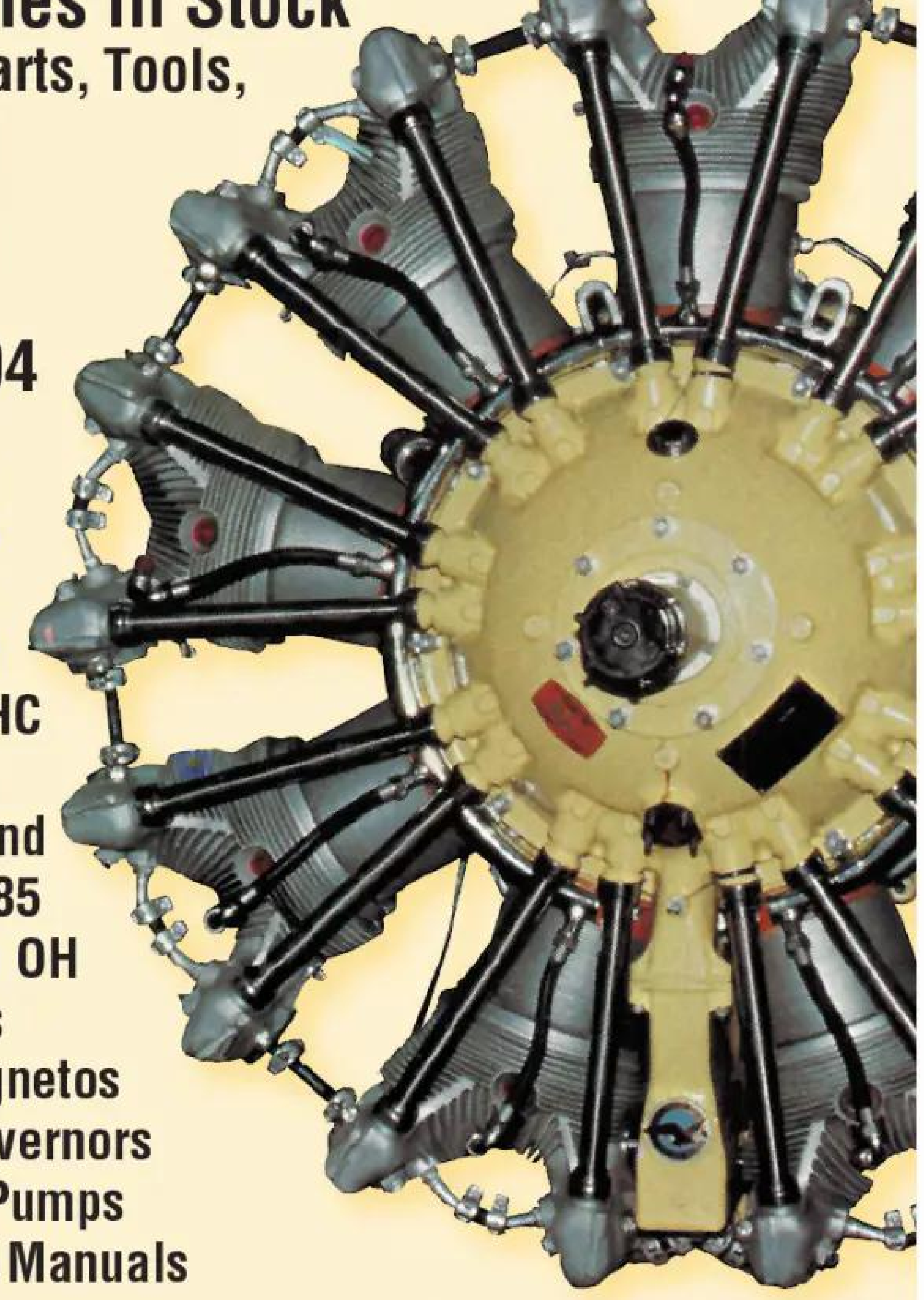


One of the hangars at Douglas, Georgia.

Fortunately, Don Brooks B-17G restoration escaped damage.

DAMAGE AT DOUGLAS

The recent storms that have swept through Florida and the southern states have caused some damage to vintage aircraft, **reports Weezie Barendse**. At Douglas, Georgia, the storm tore through the airport and did damage to the roofing structure of some of the WWII hangars but fortunately it appears that none of the vintage aircraft at the field were hurt. Don Brooks rebuild of B-17G *Liberty Belle* came through the storm without a problem. The Douglas C-54 that has been parked outside for years also survived. Further to the south at Kermit Weeks' Fantasy of Flight, the Lockheed L.1649 Starliner had its right aileron ripped from the wing but the rest of Kermit's sprawling facility came through just fine. At airports scattered through the areas hit by the two hurricanes, numerous general aviation aircraft were written off or heavily damaged. It could have been a lot worse.



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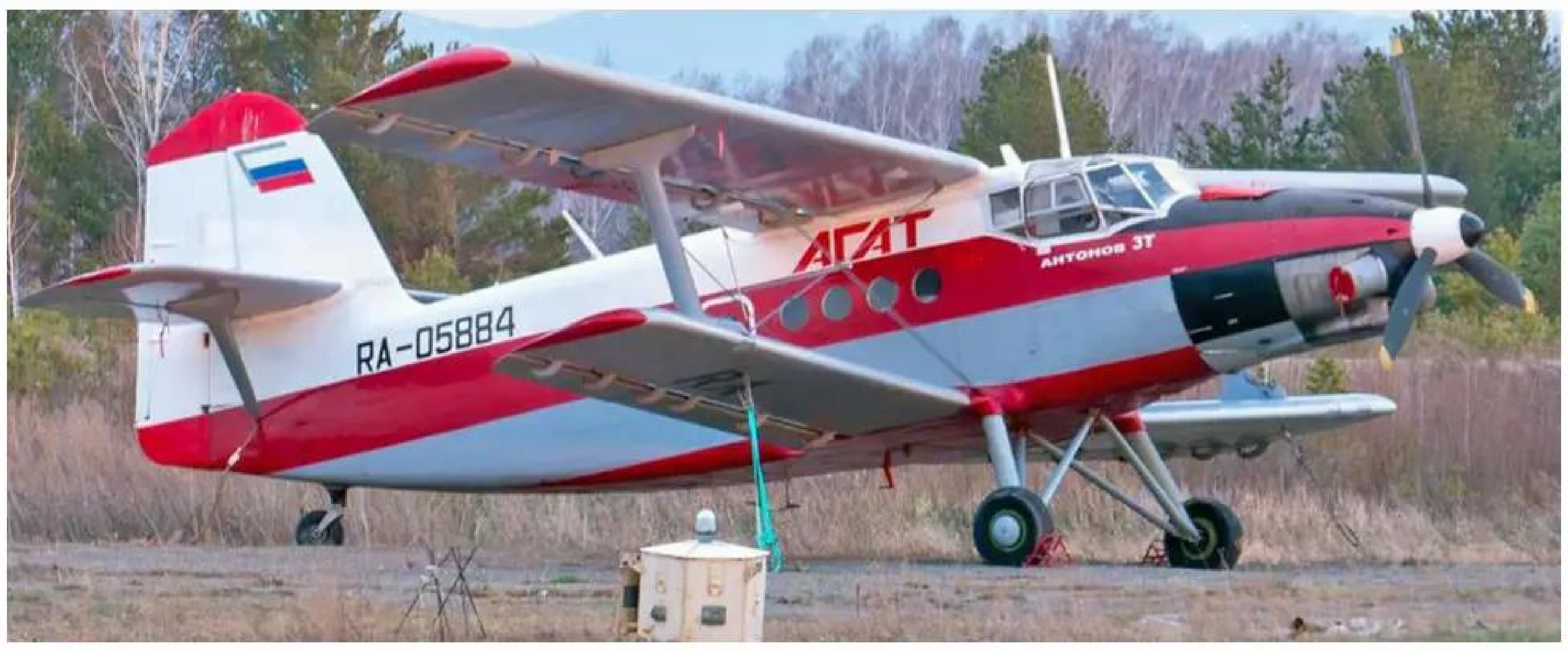
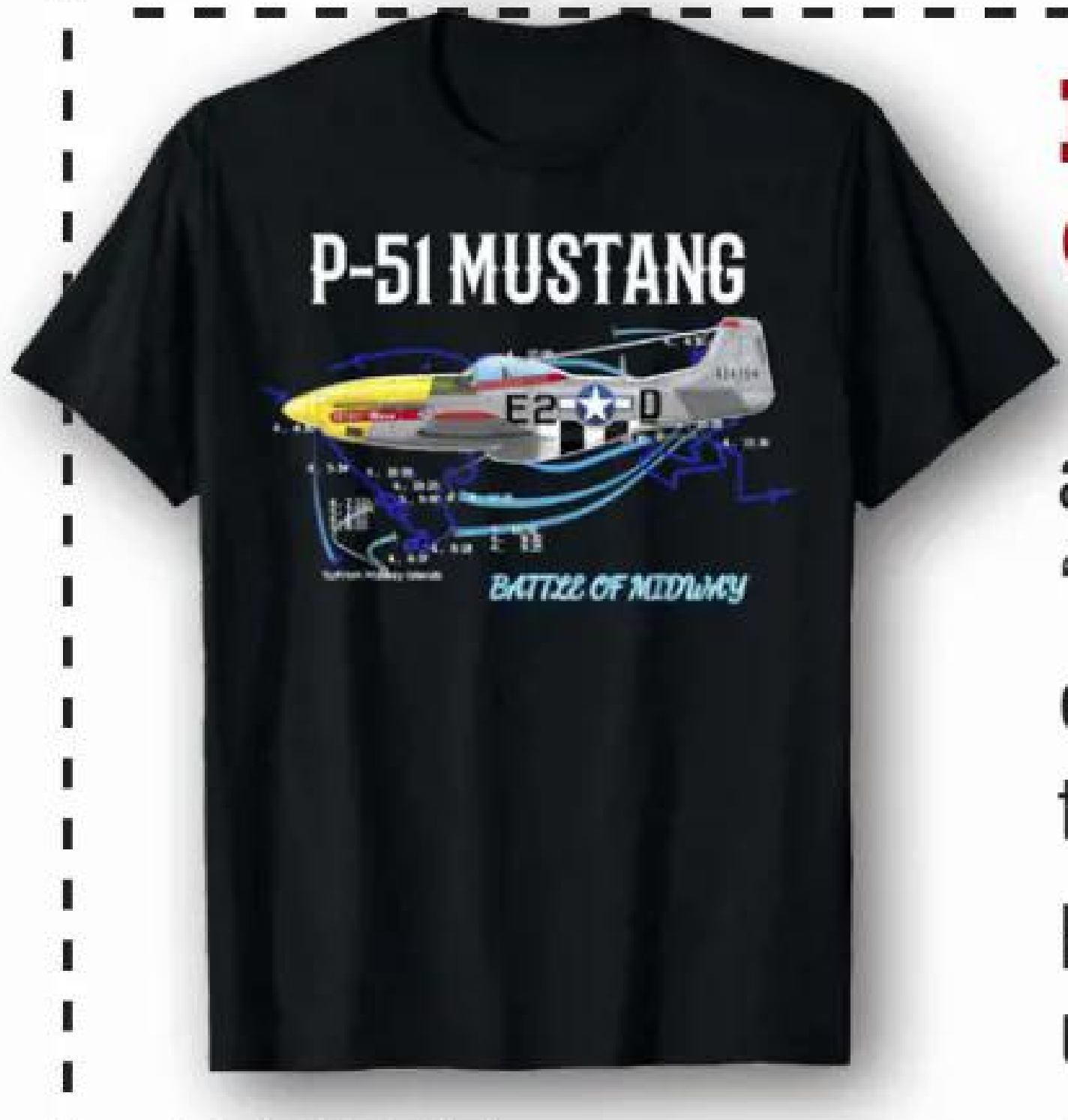


The turbine-powered An 3T prior to the crash.

COLT SCOREBOARD

In keeping with our reporting on Antonov An 2 Colts being knocked out of service, one of the latest is An 3T RA-05884 — a turbine conversion of the rugged biplane that shows just how much life is left in these planes. Operated by Borus Aircompany, the aircraft came down on 13 October near Olyokminsk Airport in the Republic of Sakha, Russia. The aircraft was climbing out when it appears the Glushenkov TVD-02 turboprop failed. The biplane came down in a wooded area with five people aboard, one of whom was unfortunately killed.

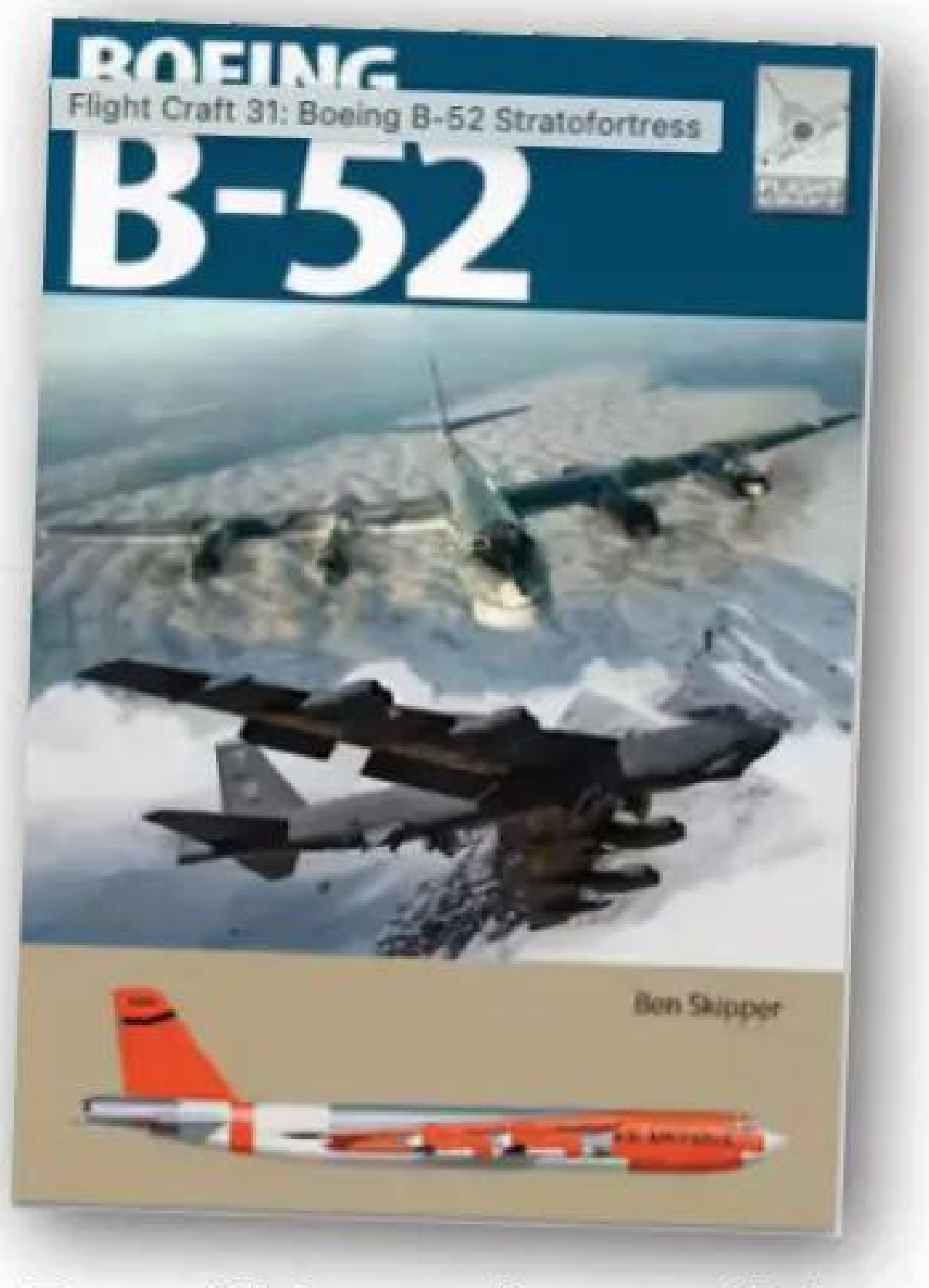
On 25 October, an An 2 registered ST-CPJ was carrying out agricultural spraying and landed on a dirt runway near Al-Fashaga Al-Kurbra area of Gedaref, Sudan (raise your hands if you have visited). The Colt then smacked into a small vehicle carrying agricultural workers, killing four and injuring a number of others. The crew of the aircraft, including a Ukrainian pilot, were not injured.



P-51D Mustang — hero of Midway.

NEW STUFF FOR GEN-M

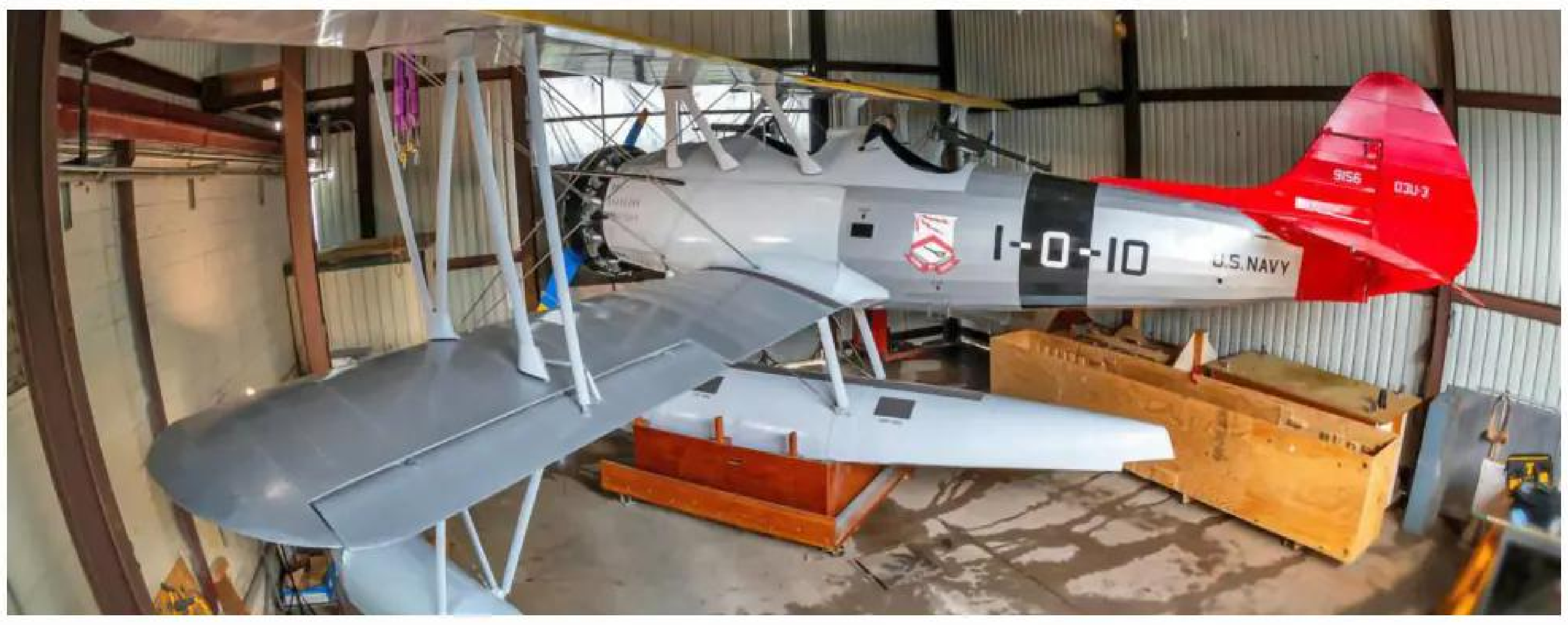
As noted in previous issues, we have started a new category — Gen-M and that stands for "Generation-Moron." One does not need to be of any particular age or in any economic group to join this generation. We started Gen-M when products began appearing that were completely unacceptable to readers of *Air Classics*. By that, we mean new books — one on Pearl Harbor showing the base being attracted by *Luftwaffe* Fw 190s. Another was a new tome on the history of the Messerschmitt Bf 109, except it had an Fw 190 for the cover plane. Then, there was a new video of Mark Bingham's P-51D Mustang starting its "radial engine." Initially, we put these on our FaceBook site. However, many responses started coming in saying "how dare we" run such inferior products. Of course, these viewers did not bother to read the explanation. Our frustrated webmaster tried to keep explaining that viewers had to read the description but even that did not keep them from voicing their displeasure. We finally gave up — determining that a certain percentage of the FaceBook folks fit permanently into the Gen-M category — and decided to show these items, when they appear, only in the magazine since *Air Classics* readers exhibit a great deal more "situational awareness." Well, we have got two new Gen-M items. The first is a P-51 Mustang t-shirt showing the aircraft as being the hero of the Battle of Midway. We all know how those dive-bomber P-51Ds swooped down on the Japanese fleet. Second is a new book purporting to tell the reader everything they want to know about the Boeing B-52. The cover sports a very rare photograph of a turboprop variant of a B-52 — except the aircraft is a mighty Tupolev Bear bomber. How do these screw-ups keep happening in a society so overloaded with information? We don't have an answer but the wonderful world of e-commerce has two new items for the G-Ms. Let us know if you find more.



Ben Skipper's terrible new book on the B-52 only enhances its reputation by utilizing a Soviet Bear on the cover.

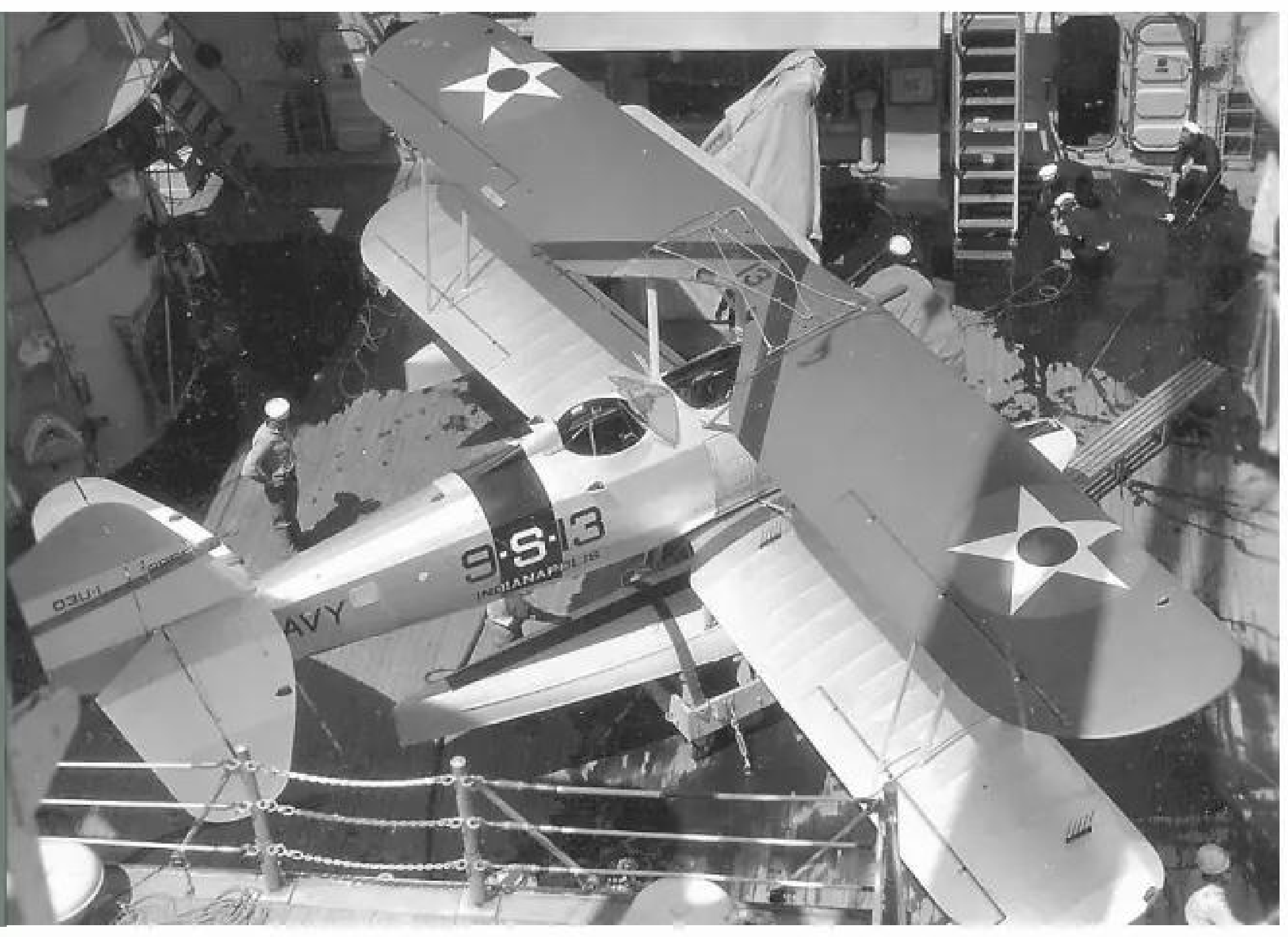
VOUGHT O3U-3 REPRODUCTION

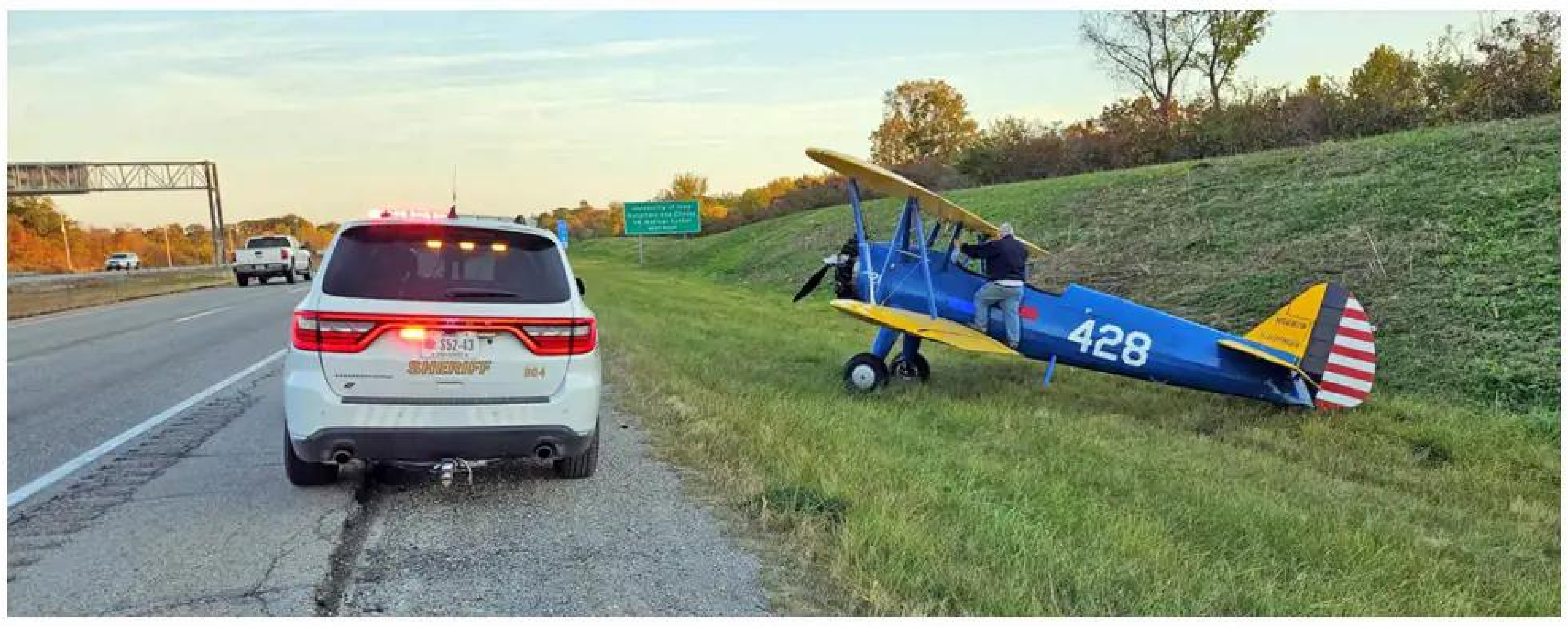
Aviation enthusiasts from the 1920s/1930s were enamored with the Vought O2U/O3U series of lumbering observation biplanes. These rugged machines operated from shore bases as well as carriers and battleships. Named Corsair, they were the first of a long-line of Vought aircraft to carry that name and today's aviation enthusiast is certainly a lot more familiar with the F4U and A-7 series of Corsairs. In an era of extremely tight military budgets, the O2U/O3U performed an admirable job as they kept the Navy flying. The last example was phased out of service in 1941 and no thought was given to preserving a biplane Corsair for posterity. The dedicated men and women of the Vought Heritage Foundation (VHF) weighed this problem and then decided to create a very accurate, but non-flying, replica of the plane. It was discovered that the VHF had over 1600 detailed construction drawings in their archive but many of these were fourth and fifth generation copies and that prevented wording and fine details from being viewable. Several computer programs were utilized to make the drawings much more readable. Since the plane was not going to be flyable, a number of liberties were taken with the steel tube fuselage and wooden wings. Also, a non-airworthy R-1340 radial engine was created while working with Covington Aircraft. The Corsairs often carried very bright and colorful markings and it was decided to paint the replica as an aircraft operated by VO-1.



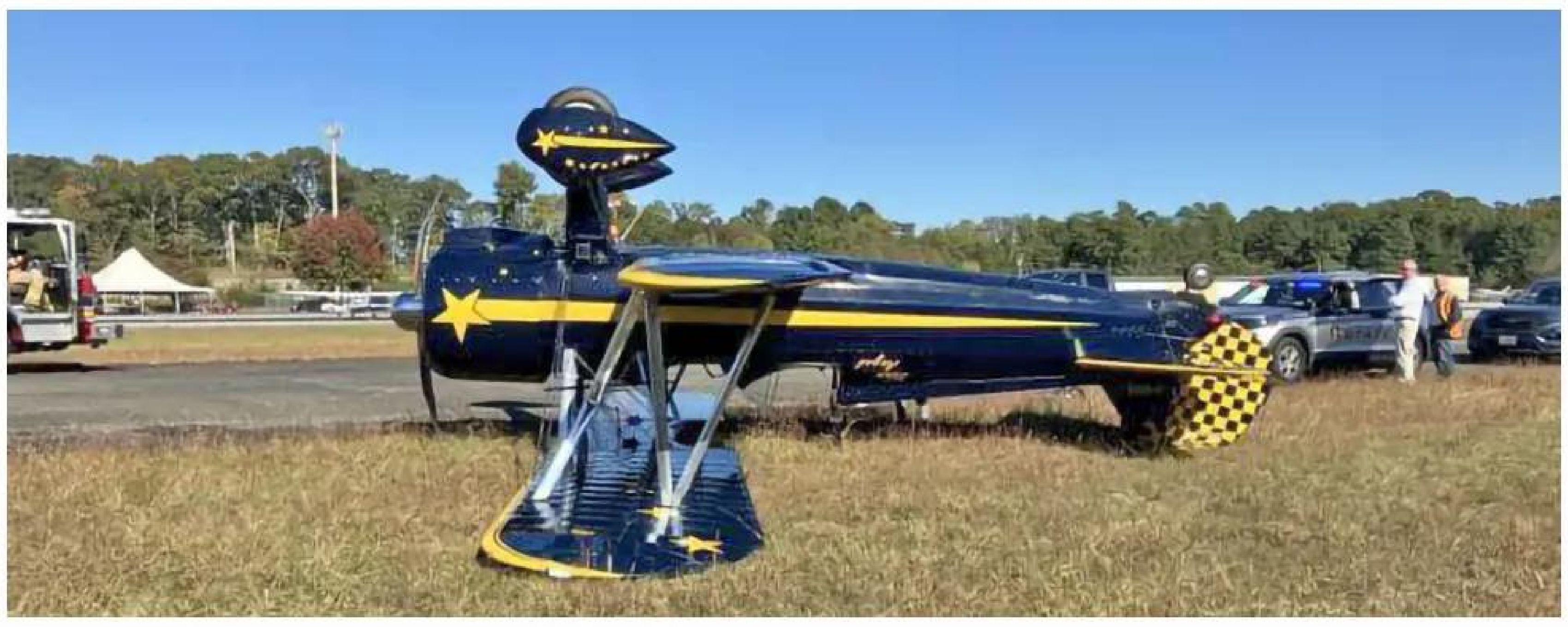
The splendid O3U-3 reproduction completed by the Vought Heritage Foundation.

Assigned to VS-9S aboard the USS *Indianapolis* (CA-35), this O3U-1 was photographed being prepared for flight. The wing chevron and fuselage band were painted Willow Green.





Stearman N56878 after its dead-stick landing near the Iowa City Airport.



Fitted with a 450-hp radial, this Stearman went inverted during landing at a Virginia airport.

MORE STEARMAN PROBLEMS

Two Stearmans recently ran into problems and one incident seems related to the fact the aircraft was not carrying the required amount of liquid needed to make noise. On 20 October, PT-17 N56878 (c/n 75-1712) was heading toward Iowa City Airport in Iowa when the pilot ran out of fuel. He set up for landing on a stretch of Highway 218 and made a safe touch-down. The plane was not damaged and the Kaydet was refueled and the Highway Patrol stopped traffic so the aircraft could takeoff and continue its flight to Iowa City Airport.

On 21 October, a modified Stearman was landing at Waltrip Williamsburg Executive Airport in Virginia when the plane got away from the pilot and wound up inverted. As can be seen, the aircraft had been converted to a 450-hp engine and was wearing a very attractive civil scheme. Damage appears to be relatively minimal for this type of accident and could have been a lot worse. The pilot reported having minor injuries.

On 4 October, Stearman N1612M collided with a tree at the Bar VK Airpark near Bolivar, Texas. Damage to the aircraft appears to be substantial. The Kaydet was observed climbing out when it started to sink back toward the ground. It touched down, bounced back into the air, and then struck a tree with its right wing. After yawing 180 degrees, the left wing became tangled in another tree which brought it down adjacent to that tree. Both occupants managed to exist the plane on their own. **AC**

Stearman after impacting with a tree at the Bar VK Airpark.

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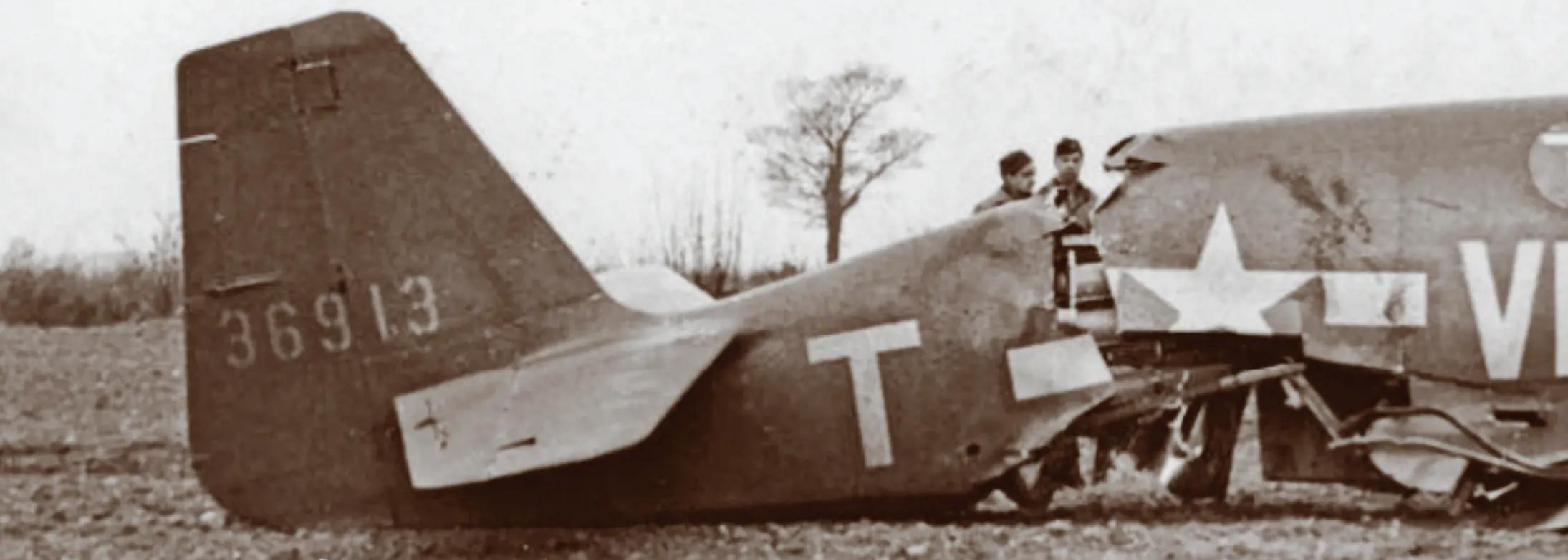
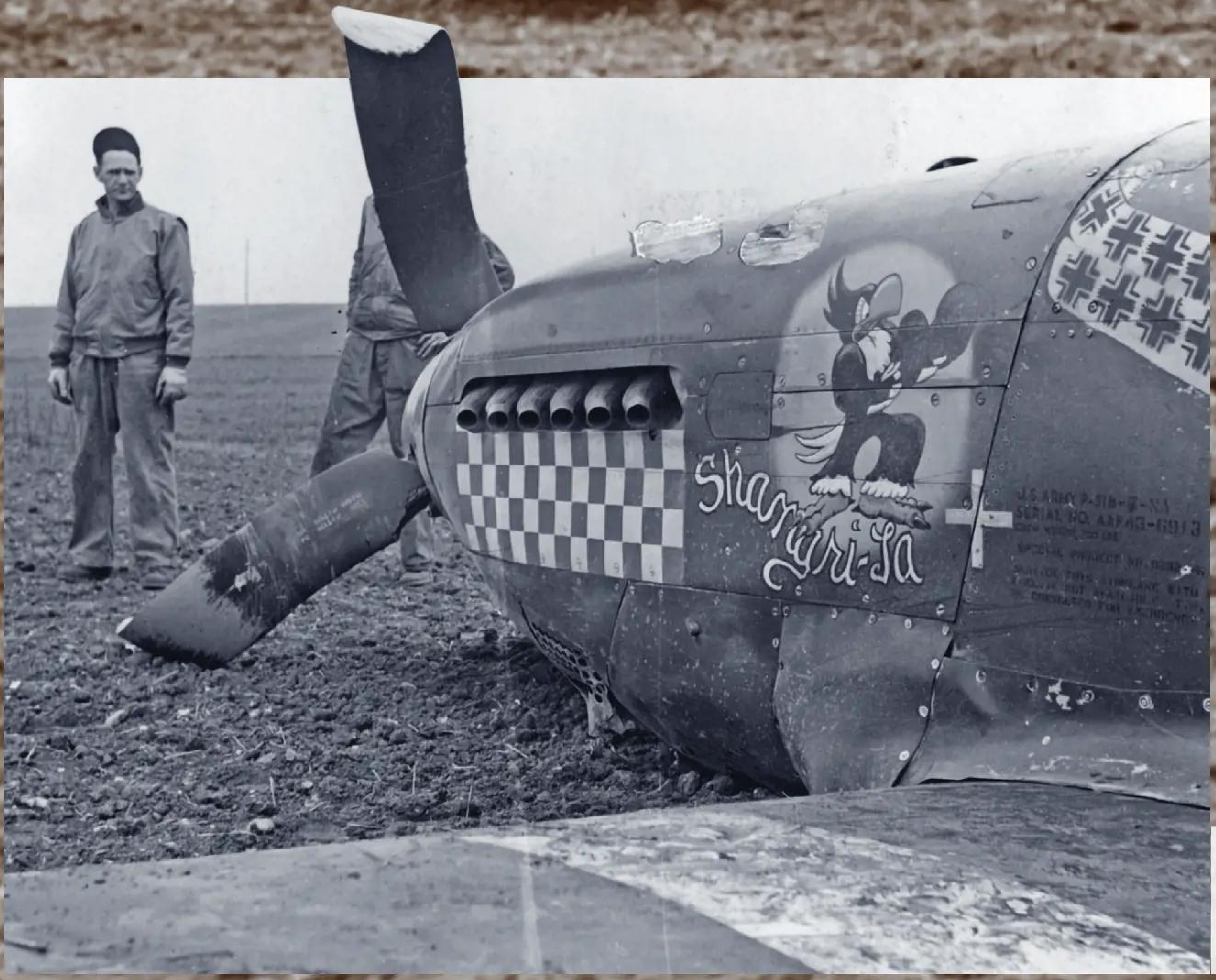
COST OF WAR

A VARIETY OF ALLIED AIRCRAFT KNOCKED OUT OF ACTION DURING THE SECOND WORLD WAR

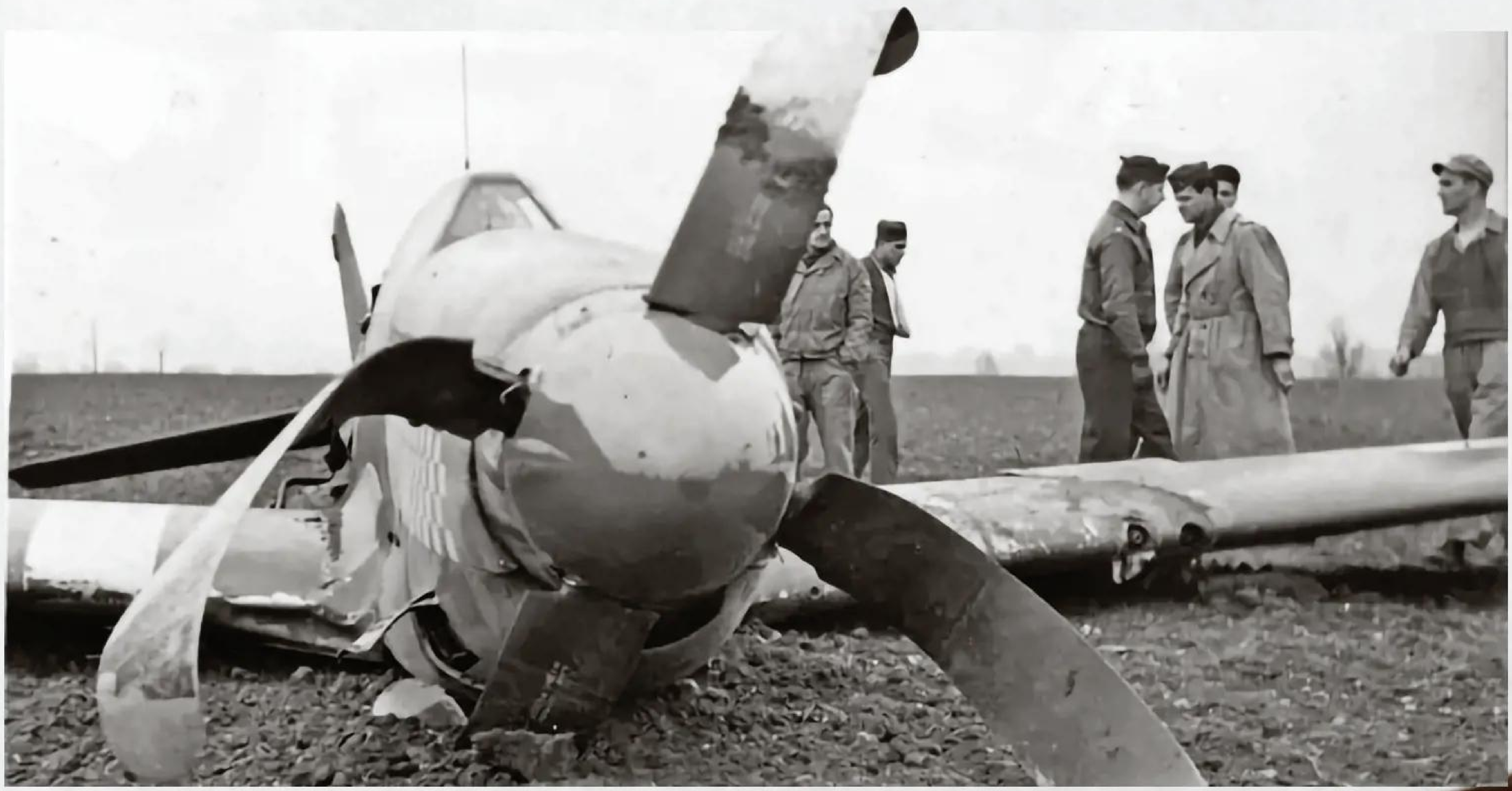
BY MICHAEL O'LEARY

Even the best got into trouble. Top-scoring ace Capt. Dominic Salvatore "Don" Gentile was a hero not only to the American public but also to his fellow pilots in the 4th Fighter Group. Going north before Pearl Harbor to fight the Germans, Gentile enlisted in the Royal Canadian Air Force and was posted to the United Kingdom to pilot Spitfires with No. 122 Squadron, one of three famed "Eagle" Squadrons made up of Americans. With the US entry into the war, he transferred to the USAAF's 4th Fighter Group and quickly made a name for himself. His assigned aircraft was P-51B 43-6913/VF*T *Shangri-La*. Along with wingman John T. Godfrey, the pair became a public relations dream and on 13 April 1944 (he had been awarded the DSO on 11 April), Gentile went aloft to make a series of passes at the 4th FG's Debden airfield for a throng of gathered reporters and photographers. Each pass got progressively lower until Gentile had the misfortunate to literally "fly" into the ground at high speed. The Mustang skidded for several hundred yards before slithering to a stop in a muddy field. Gentile emerged unhurt but the damage was done as the photographers fired away.

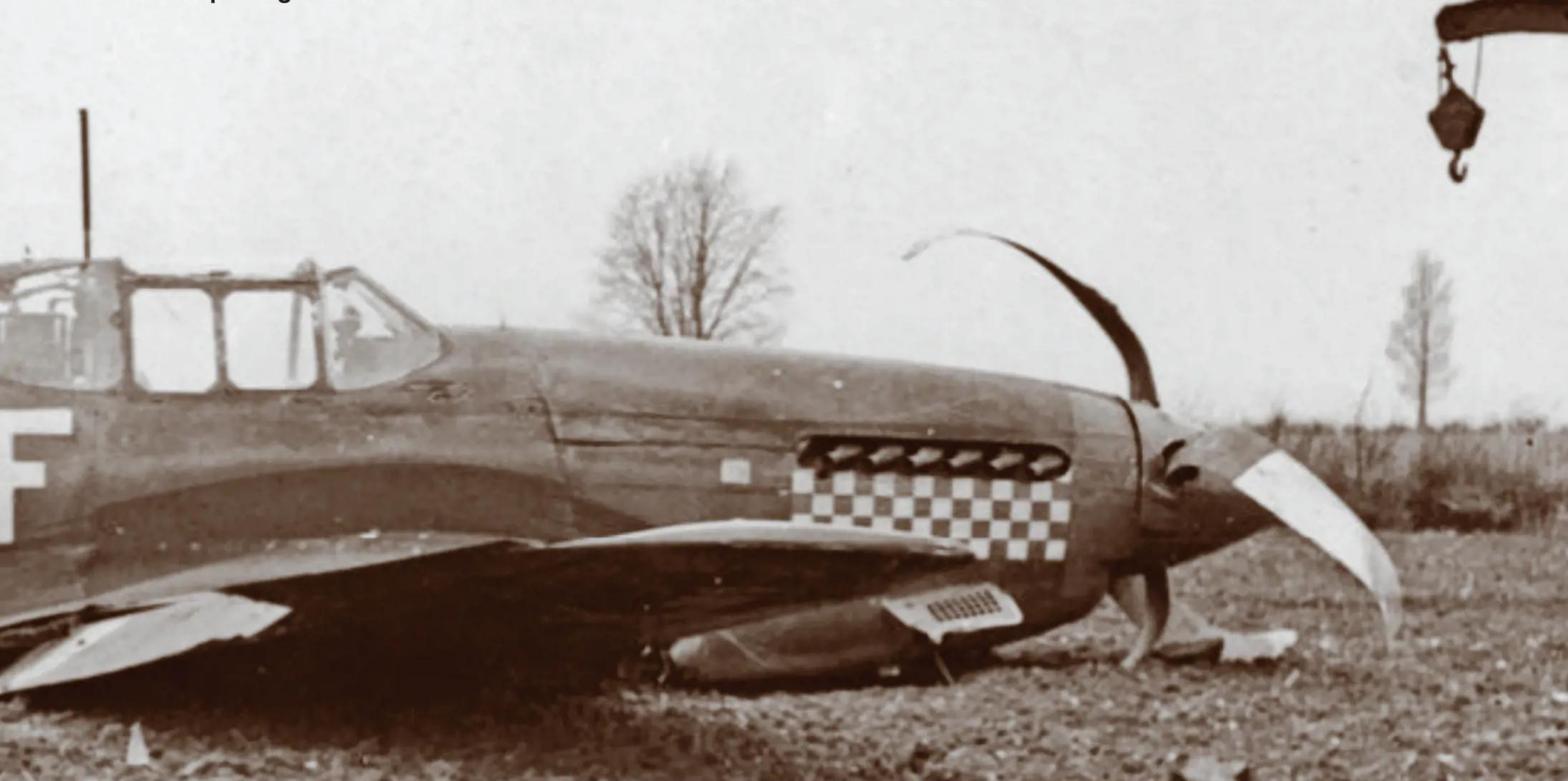


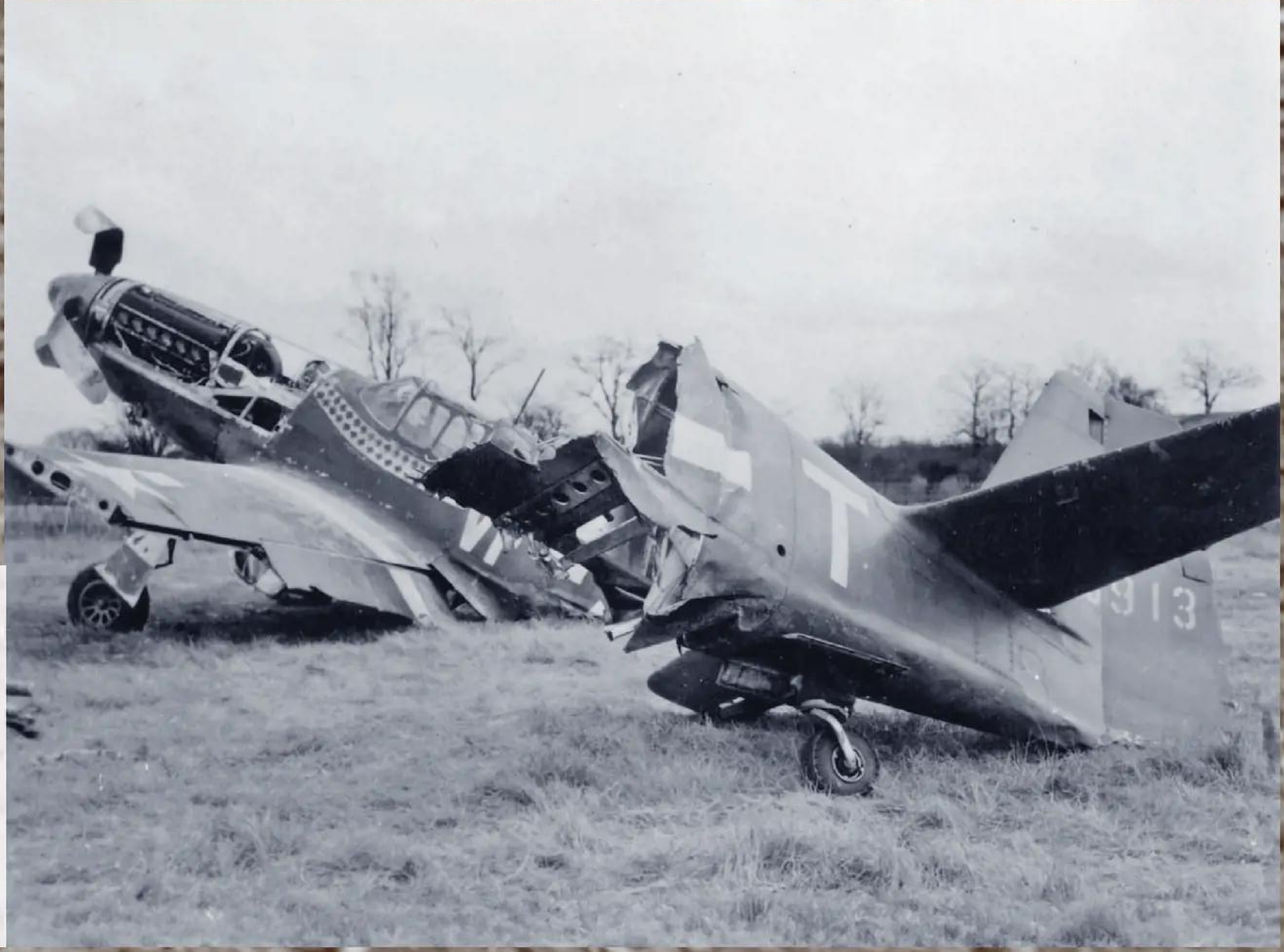


It was up to the groundcrew to remove the wrecked Mustang. This view shows the famed artwork on *Shangri-La* to advantage.

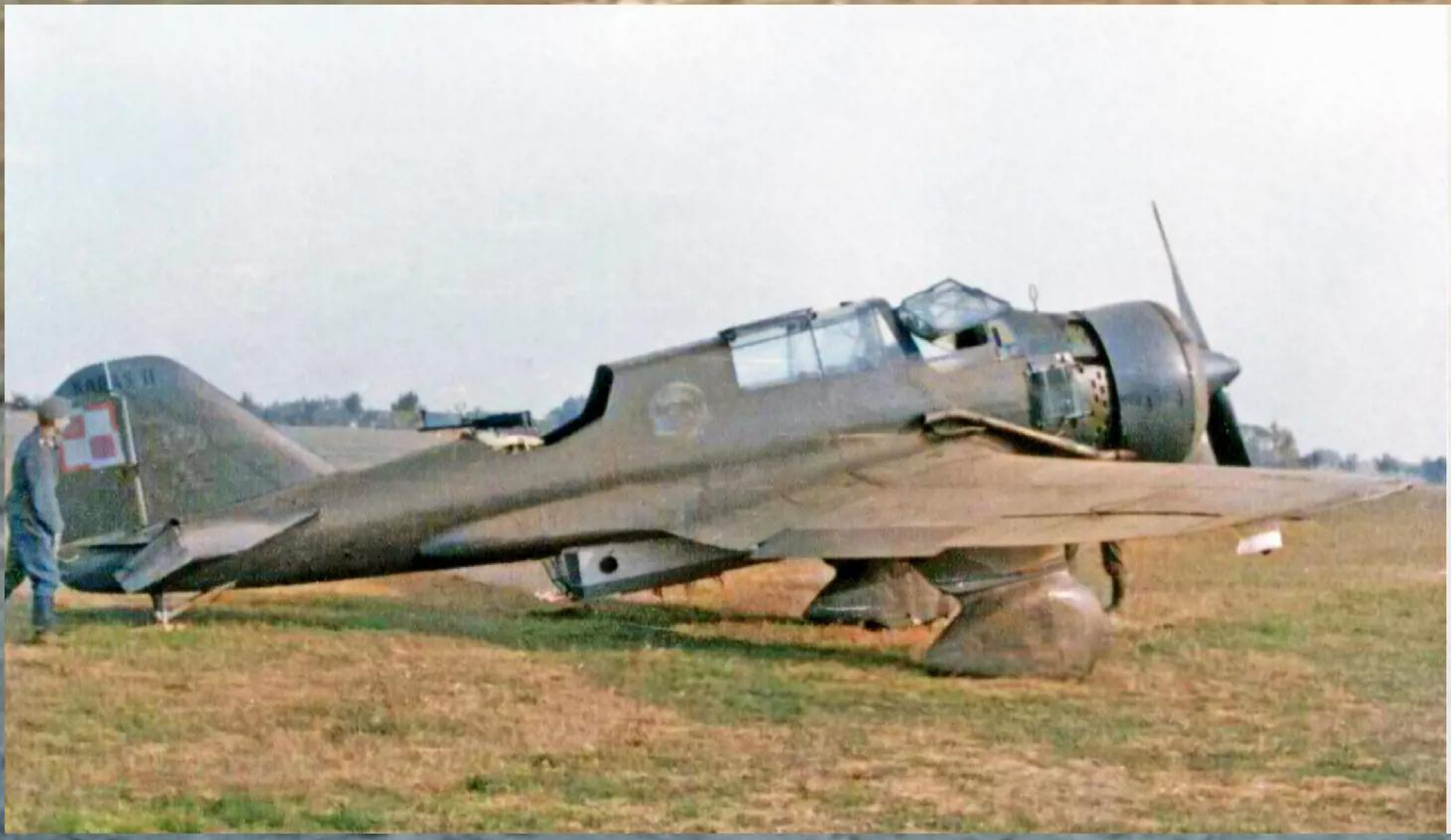


Colonel Don Blakeslee, commander of the 4th FG, was enraged at Gentile. He had a standing order that any pilot that damaged an aircraft while "grandstanding" would be shipped home immediately and that is exactly what happened although Gentile's trip to the States was later noted as a "planned" tour to sell War Bonds. Members of the 4th FG along with the press milled around the wreck of *Shangri-La*. When the Mustang hit the ground, the Harrison radiator and associated systems were shoved up into the fuselage, breaking the fighter's back. An angry Blakeslee, in overcoat, can be seen inspecting the wreck.

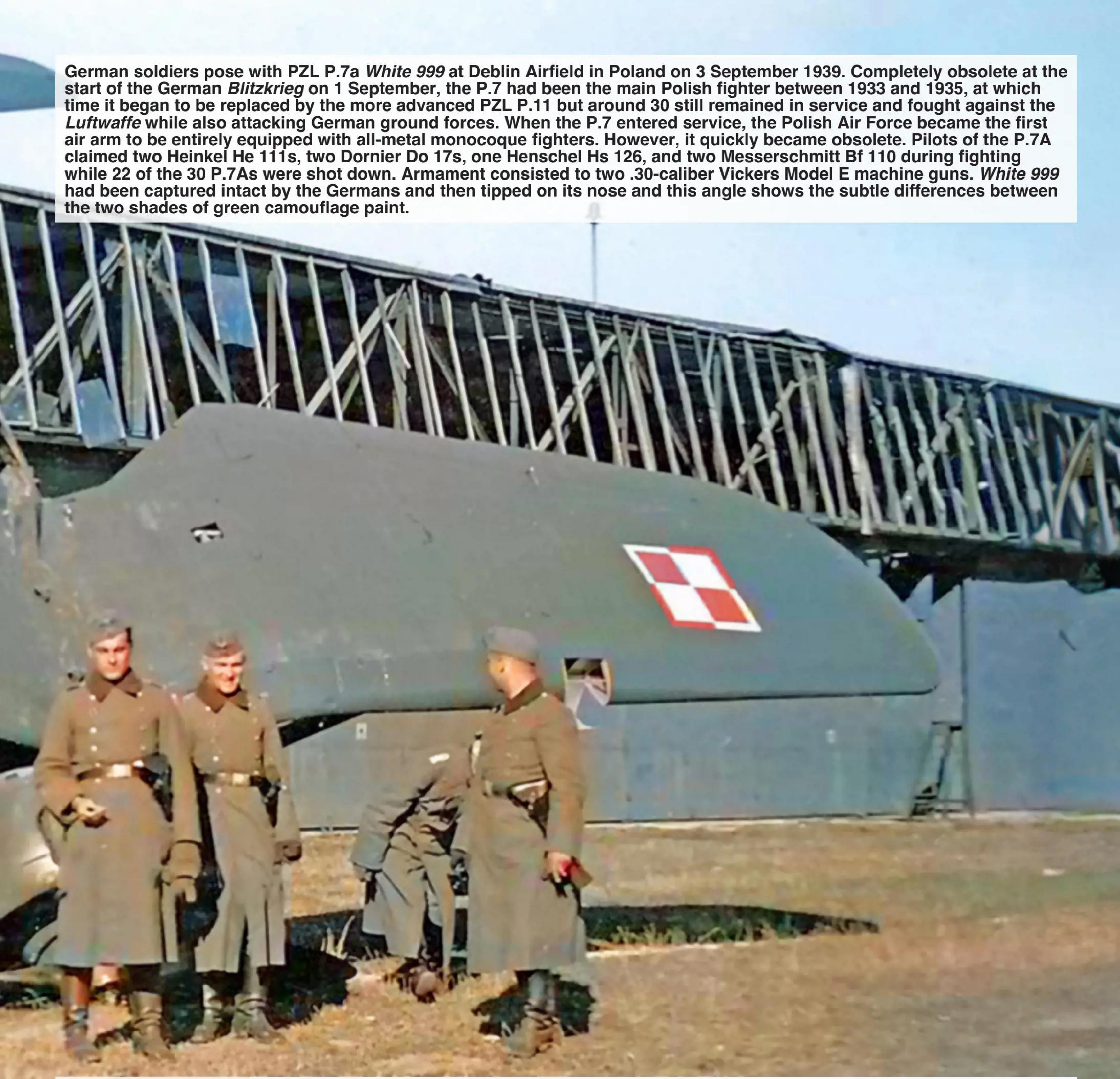




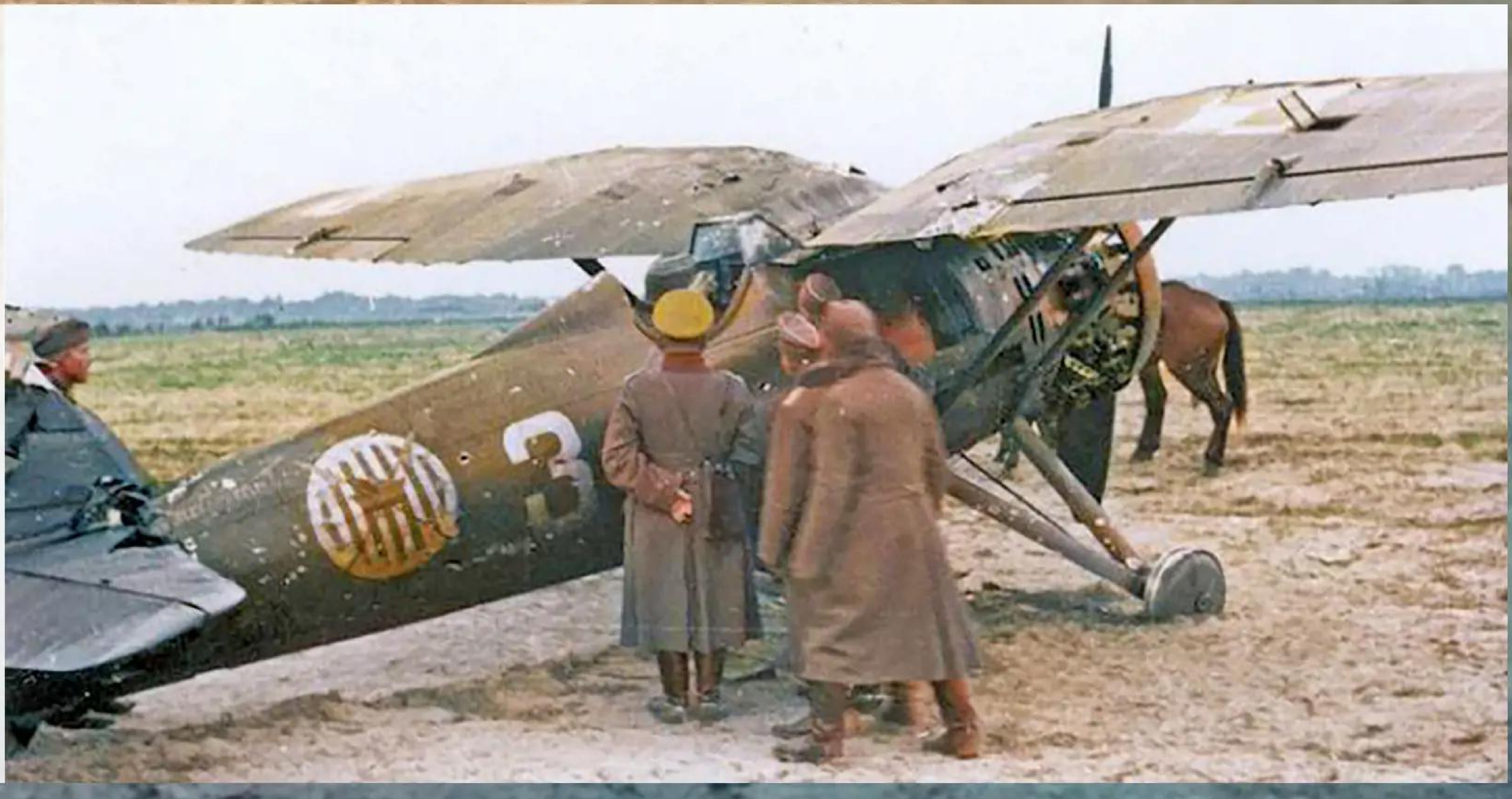
When the damaged fighter was moved, it literally broke in two. Some parts were salvaged from the P-51B but what finally happened to the wreck of the famed fighter has been somewhat of a mystery. Some sources state that the wreckage was dumped in a nearby pond, others say the Mustang was buried in a farmer's field, but the most likely end was that the P-51B was stripped of parts and scrapped.



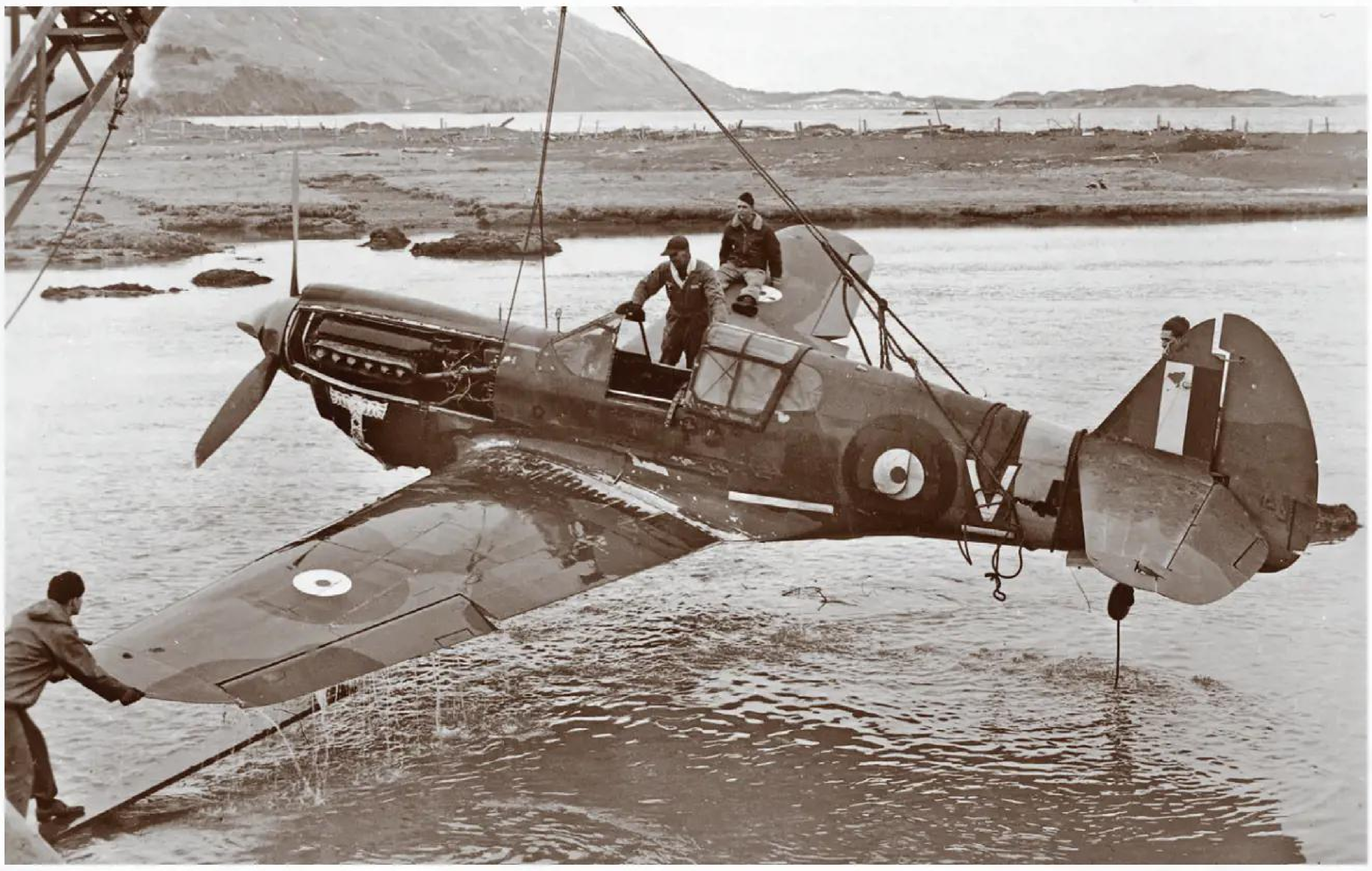
German soldier examines a fully armed PZL P.23A *Karas II* (Crucian Carp) light bomber/recon aircraft captured during the first week of fighting. Note the large and awkward “bathtub” under the fuselage that would be used for recon work and also by a defensive gunner. On 2 September, the second day of the war, a single PZL.23B of *21 Eskadra* made a bombing attack again a factory in Ohlau, Germany. This was the first attack against a target within the Third *Reich*. By the end of the month, about 120 PZL.23s (approximately 86% of the inventory) had been shot down. Note how the red and white national insignia along with the *esjadra* insignia mid-fuselage had been both toned-down by an overspray of paint.



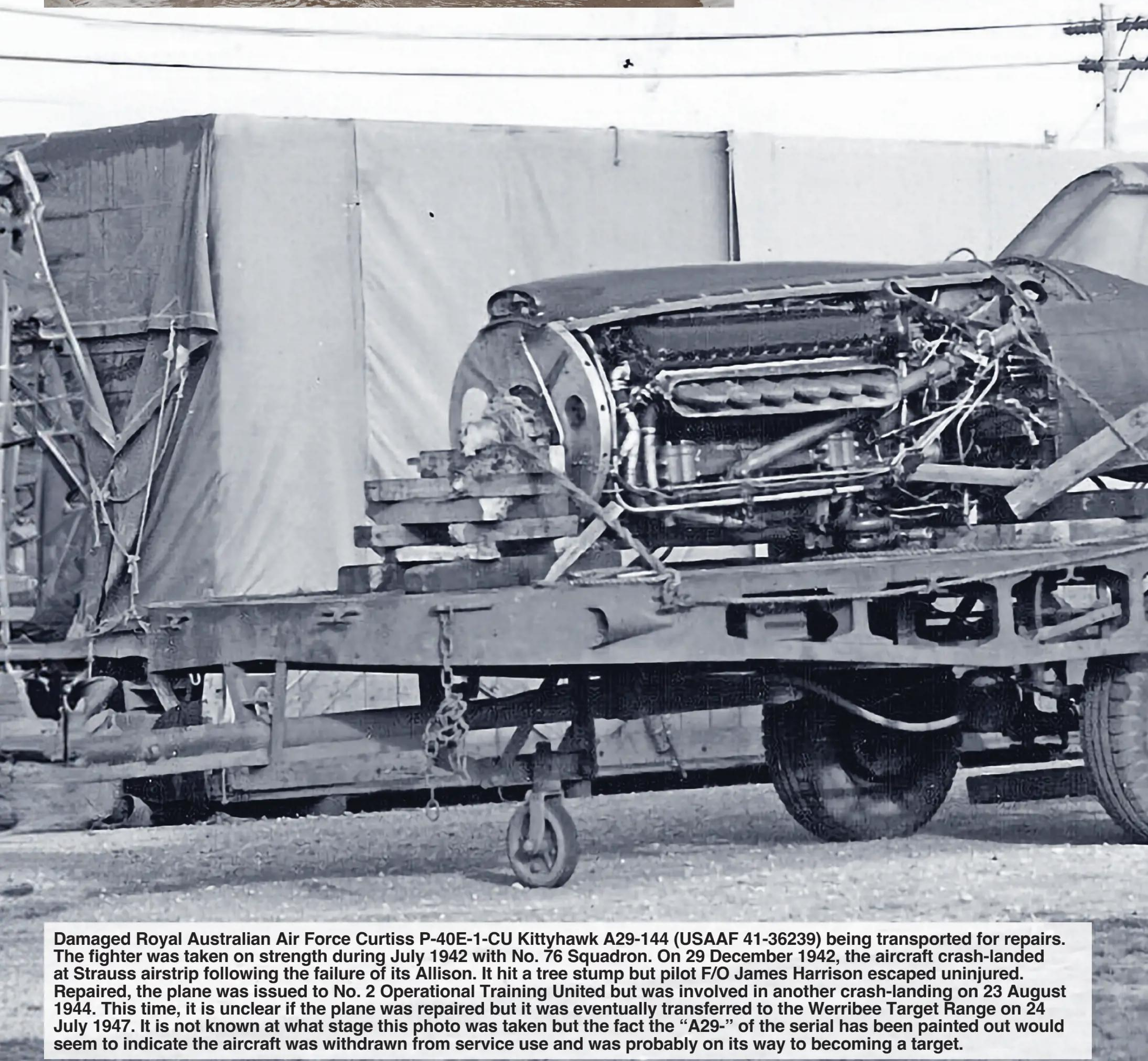
German soldiers pose with PZL P.7a *White 999* at Deblin Airfield in Poland on 3 September 1939. Completely obsolete at the start of the German *Blitzkrieg* on 1 September, the P.7 had been the main Polish fighter between 1933 and 1935, at which time it began to be replaced by the more advanced PZL P.11 but around 30 still remained in service and fought against the *Luftwaffe* while also attacking German ground forces. When the P.7 entered service, the Polish Air Force became the first air arm to be entirely equipped with all-metal monocoque fighters. However, it quickly became obsolete. Pilots of the P.7A claimed two Heinkel He 111s, two Dornier Do 17s, one Henschel Hs 126, and two Messerschmitt Bf 110 during fighting while 22 of the 30 P.7As were shot down. Armament consisted to two .30-caliber Vickers Model E machine guns. *White 999* had been captured intact by the Germans and then tipped on its nose and this angle shows the subtle differences between the two shades of green camouflage paint.



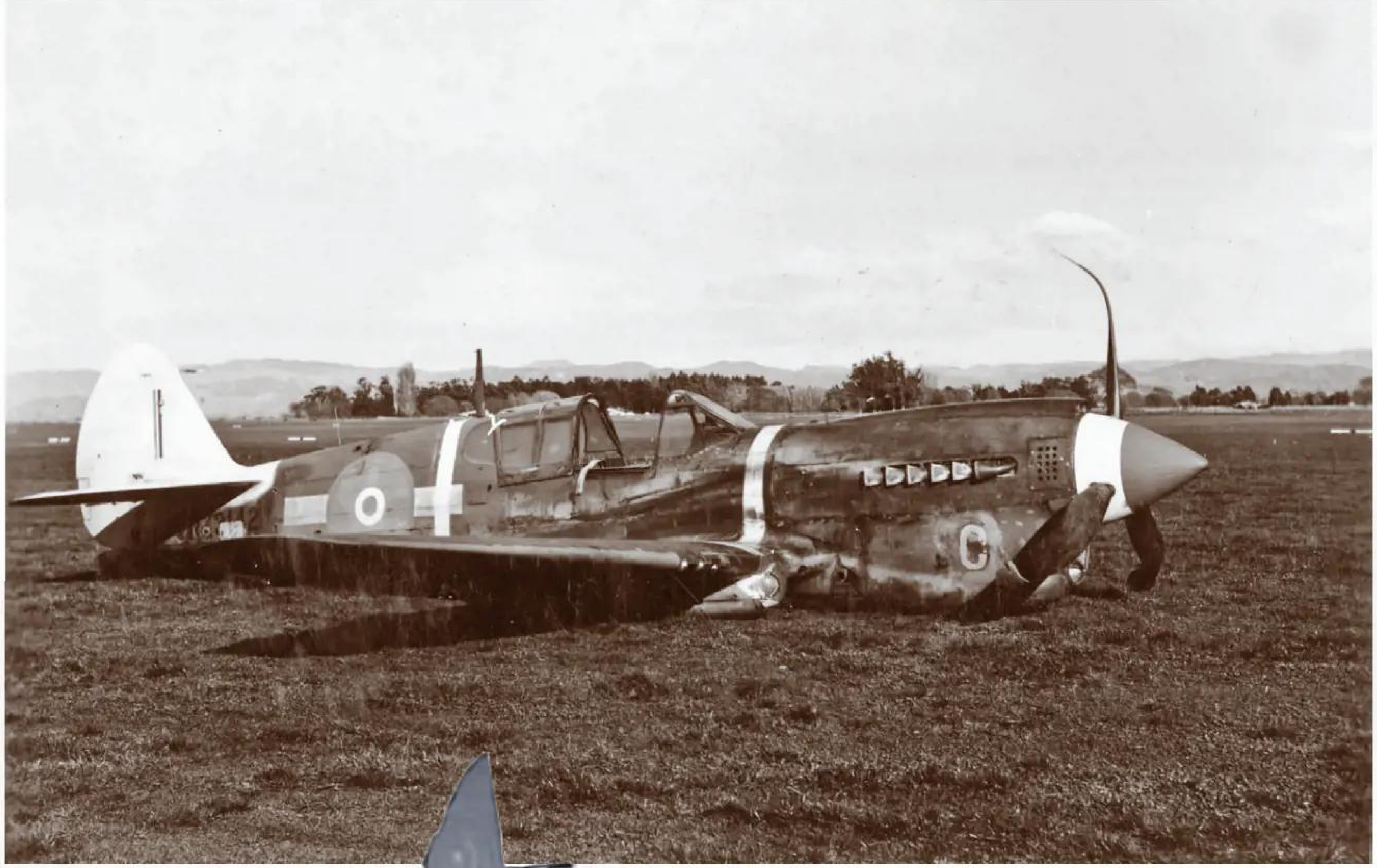
Germans check out a strafed PZL P.11A *White 3* of *111 Eskadra*. The type was the most numerous of Polish fighters at the start of the war but a significant number were destroyed/damaged on the ground by the swiftly moving *Blitzkrieg*. Around three dozen escaped to Romania where they were taken over by the Royal Romanian Air Force. PZL P.11 pilots claimed 110 victories over *Luftwaffe* aircraft for a loss of about 100 of their own.

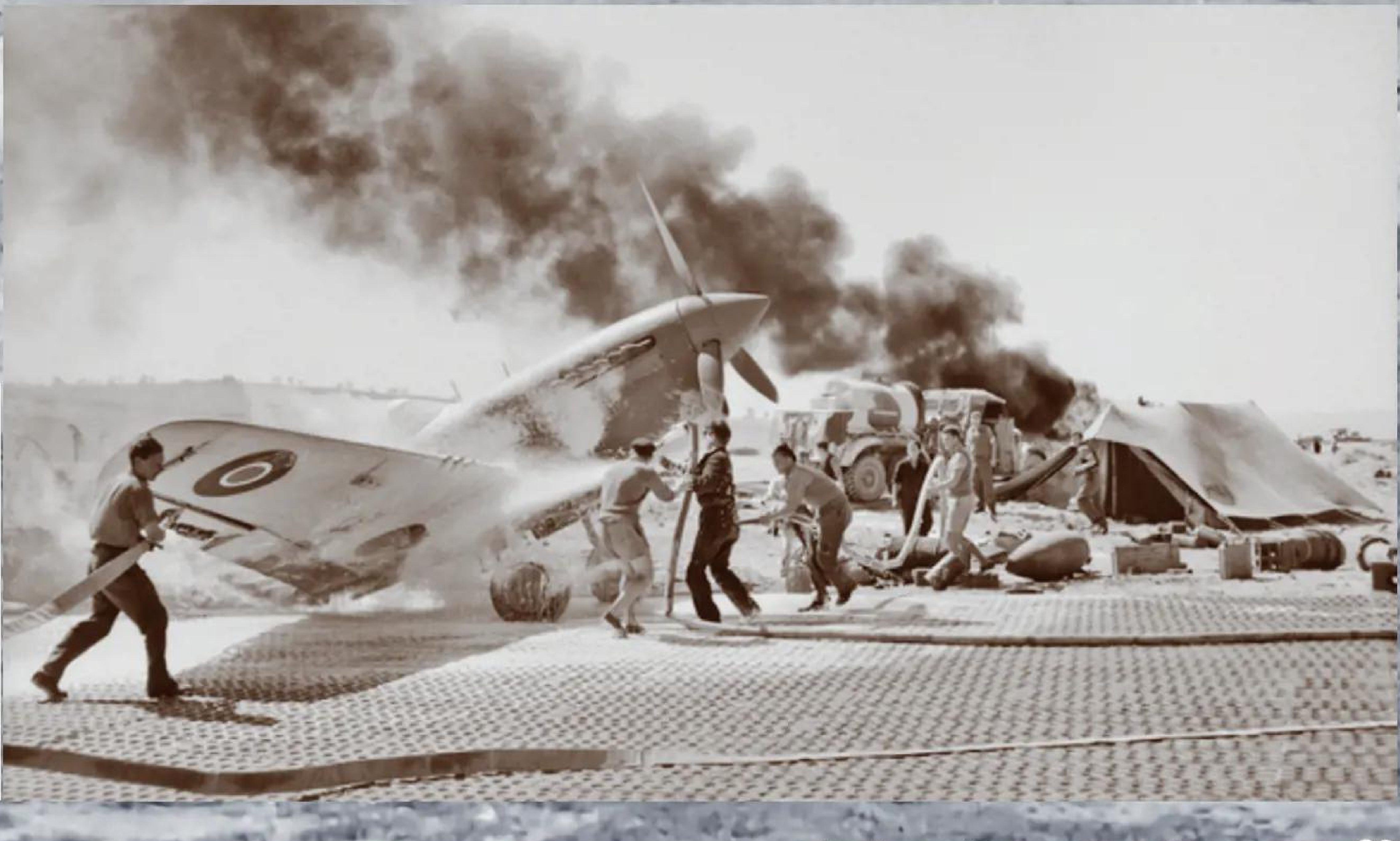


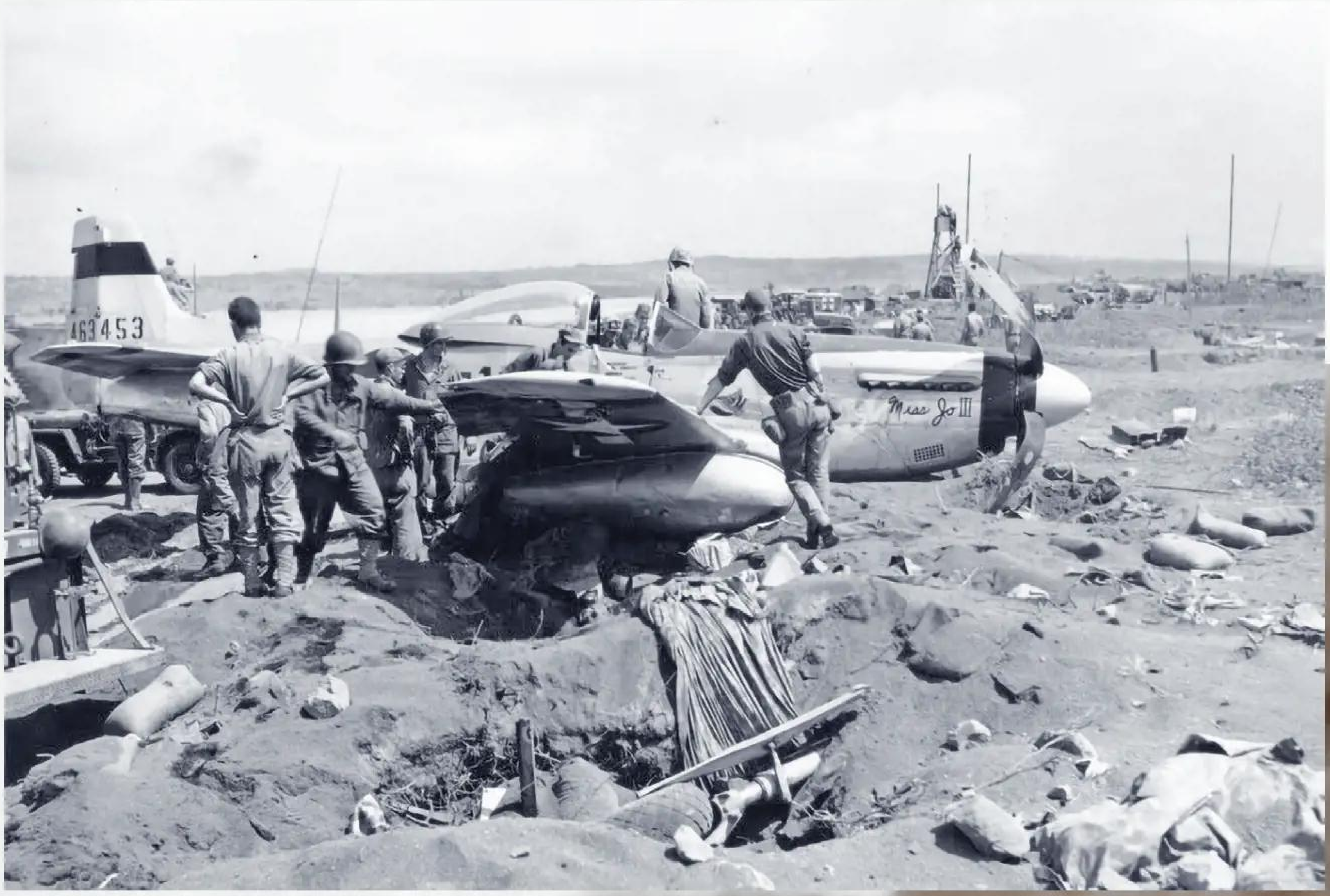
On 19 April 1943, S.R.J. McLeod was undertaking a maintenance flight on a P-40E of Royal Canadian Air Force's No. 111 Squadron at Fort Greely on Kodiak Island in Alaska. The squadron was giving support to USAAF aircraft in the Aleutians. An electrical failure prevented lowering the flaps on RCAF 1087 (RAF AL194) so the pilot had to make a faster than normal landing. The plane, coded LZ*V, went off the runway and into about five feet of water. Strangely, McLeod had an earlier accident with this aircraft on 18 September 1942 at Elmendorf Field.



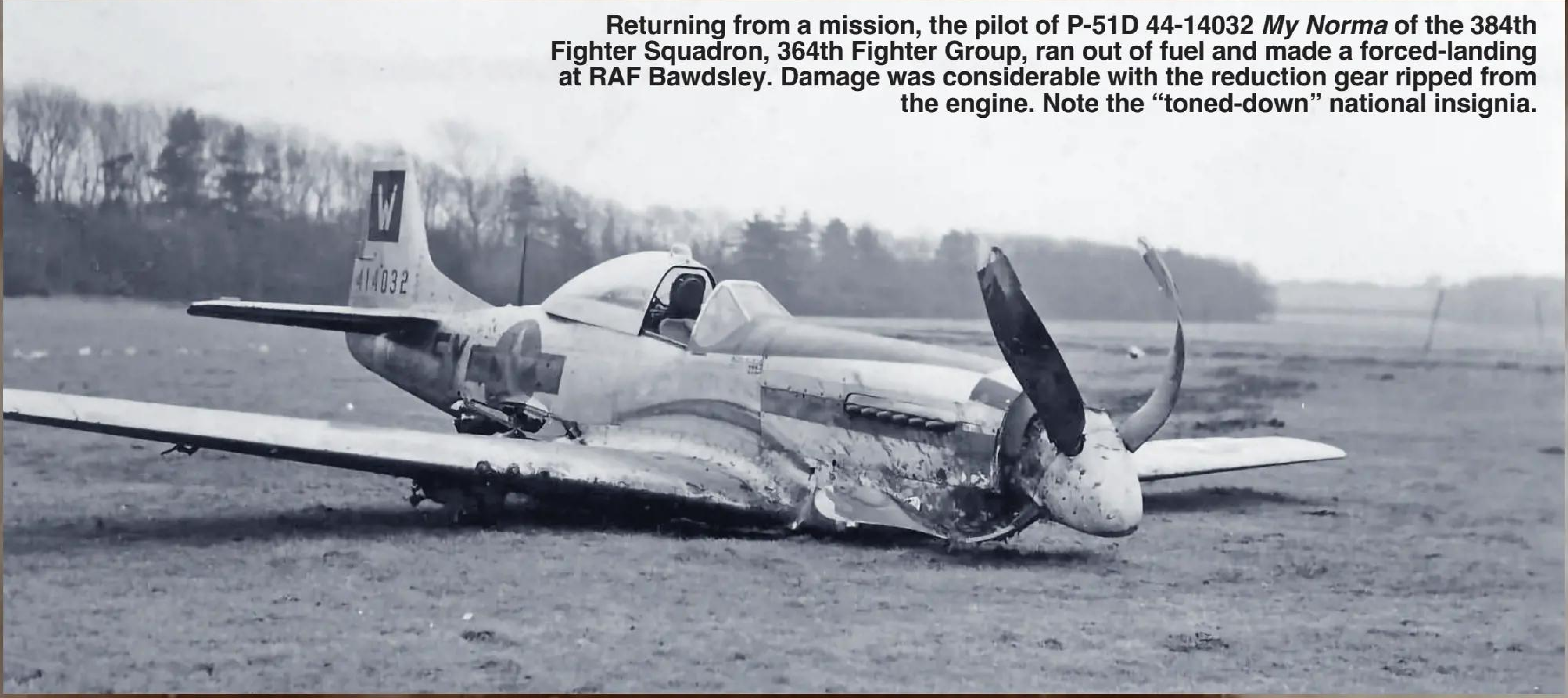
Damaged Royal Australian Air Force Curtiss P-40E-1-CU Kittyhawk A29-144 (USAAF 41-36239) being transported for repairs. The fighter was taken on strength during July 1942 with No. 76 Squadron. On 29 December 1942, the aircraft crash-landed at Strauss airstrip following the failure of its Allison. It hit a tree stump but pilot F/O James Harrison escaped uninjured. Repaired, the plane was issued to No. 2 Operational Training United but was involved in another crash-landing on 23 August 1944. This time, it is unclear if the plane was repaired but it was eventually transferred to the Werribee Target Range on 24 July 1947. It is not known at what stage this photo was taken but the fact the "A29-" of the serial has been painted out would seem to indicate the aircraft was withdrawn from service use and was probably on its way to becoming a target.


Royal New Zealand Air Force Kittyhawk NZ3147 after a near-perfect belly-landing that took place under unusual circumstances. On 20 June 1943, S/ Ldr. R.M. McKay was flying this aircraft during an aerial combat training exercise. He was "attacked" by his wingman but the aircraft's guns were accidently armed and NZ3147's coolant system was knocked out. McKay earned the dubious distinction of being the only aircraft shot down over New Zealand. The plane was repaired and continued flying until it wound up in a junk yard for Lend-Lease P-40s. The hulk was eventually discovered in the 1980s and the aircraft was returned back to flying condition.

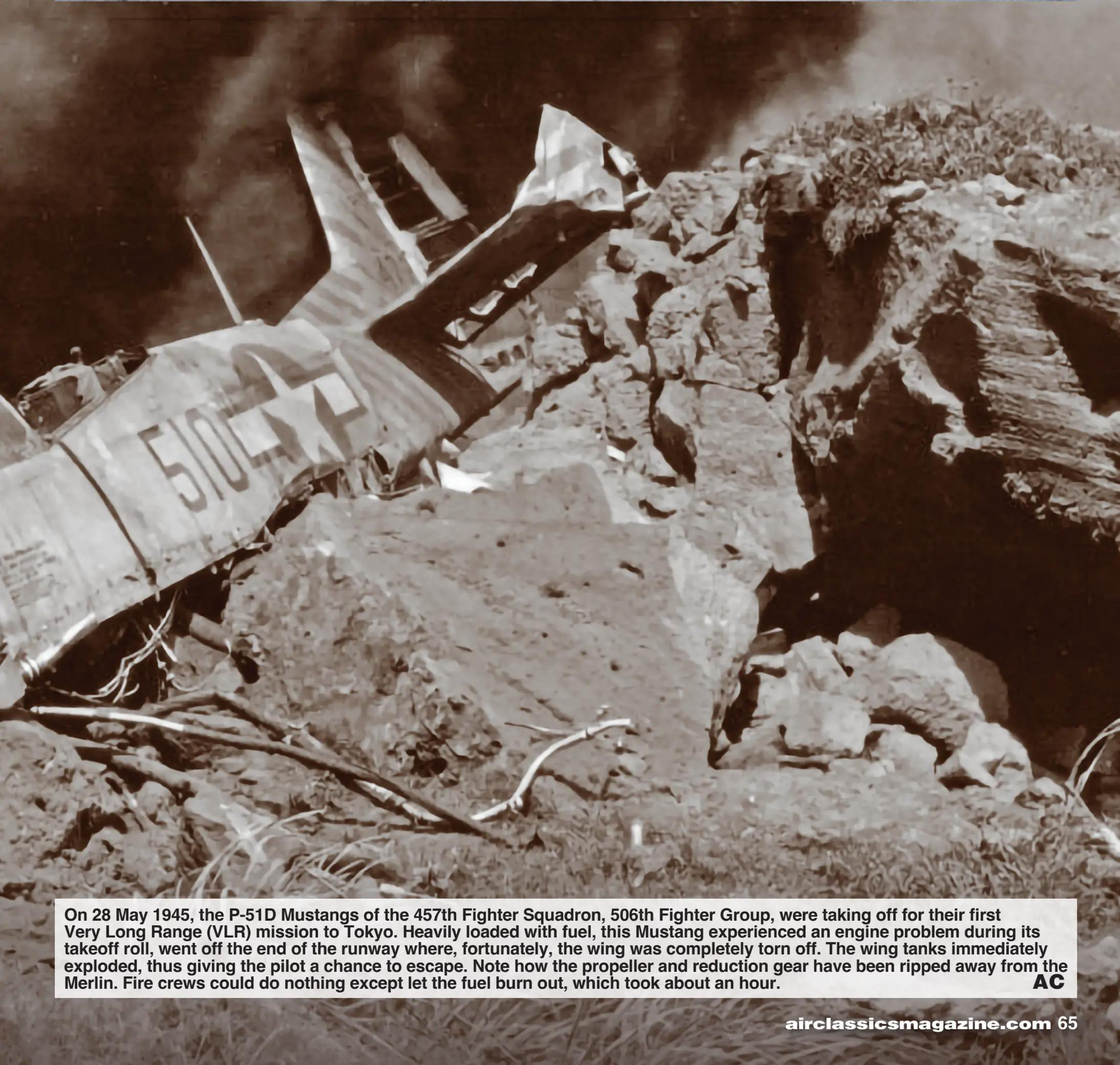

Difficult to figure out how he got this wrong, but he did. Curtiss Kittyhawks of the Royal Australian Air Force's No. 3 Squadron were being prepared for a mission at the unit's base at Cutella Airfield in Italy on 29 April 1944 when a USAAF P-47D Thunderbolt suddenly appeared and strafed the line-up of fighters. As can be seen, numerous aircraft were destroyed or damaged by the marauding Thunderbolt.



Sadly, accidents were very common on Iwo Jima. P-51D 44-63453 *Miss Jo III* failed to get airborne and went off the runway. Note one of the main gear legs in the crater in the foreground. The Mustang was assigned to the 78th Fighter Squadron, 15th Fighter Group, and since repair facilities on the island were limited, the plane was probably stripped of parts and scrapped.



Returning from a mission, the pilot of P-51D 44-14032 *My Norma* of the 384th Fighter Squadron, 364th Fighter Group, ran out of fuel and made a forced-landing at RAF Bawdsley. Damage was considerable with the reduction gear ripped from the engine. Note the "toned-down" national insignia.

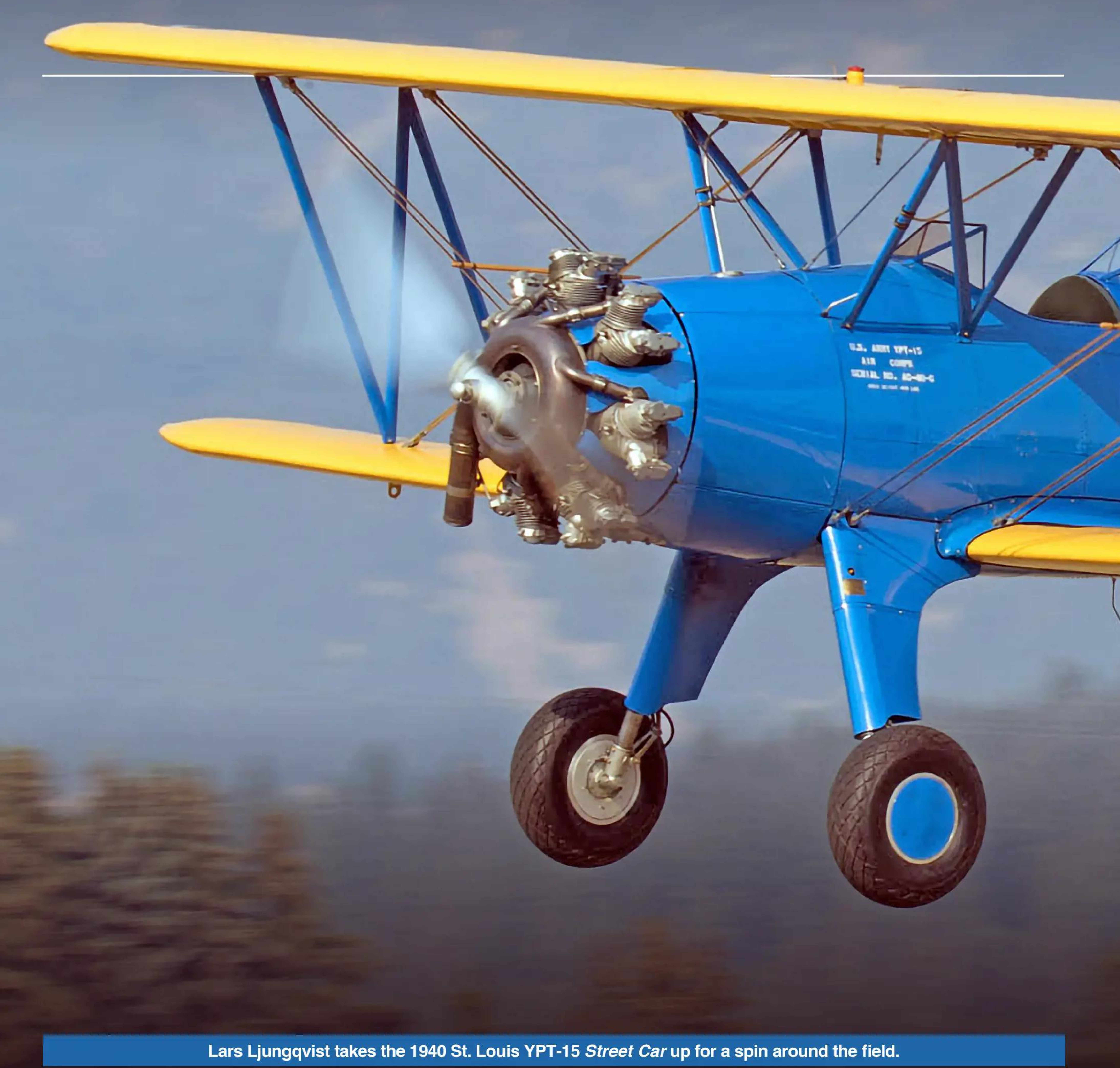


On 28 May 1945, the P-51D Mustangs of the 457th Fighter Squadron, 506th Fighter Group, were taking off for their first Very Long Range (VLR) mission to Tokyo. Heavily loaded with fuel, this Mustang experienced an engine problem during its takeoff roll, went off the end of the runway where, fortunately, the wing was completely torn off. The wing tanks immediately exploded, thus giving the pilot a chance to escape. Note how the propeller and reduction gear have been ripped away from the Merlin. Fire crews could do nothing except let the fuel burn out, which took about an hour. **AC**

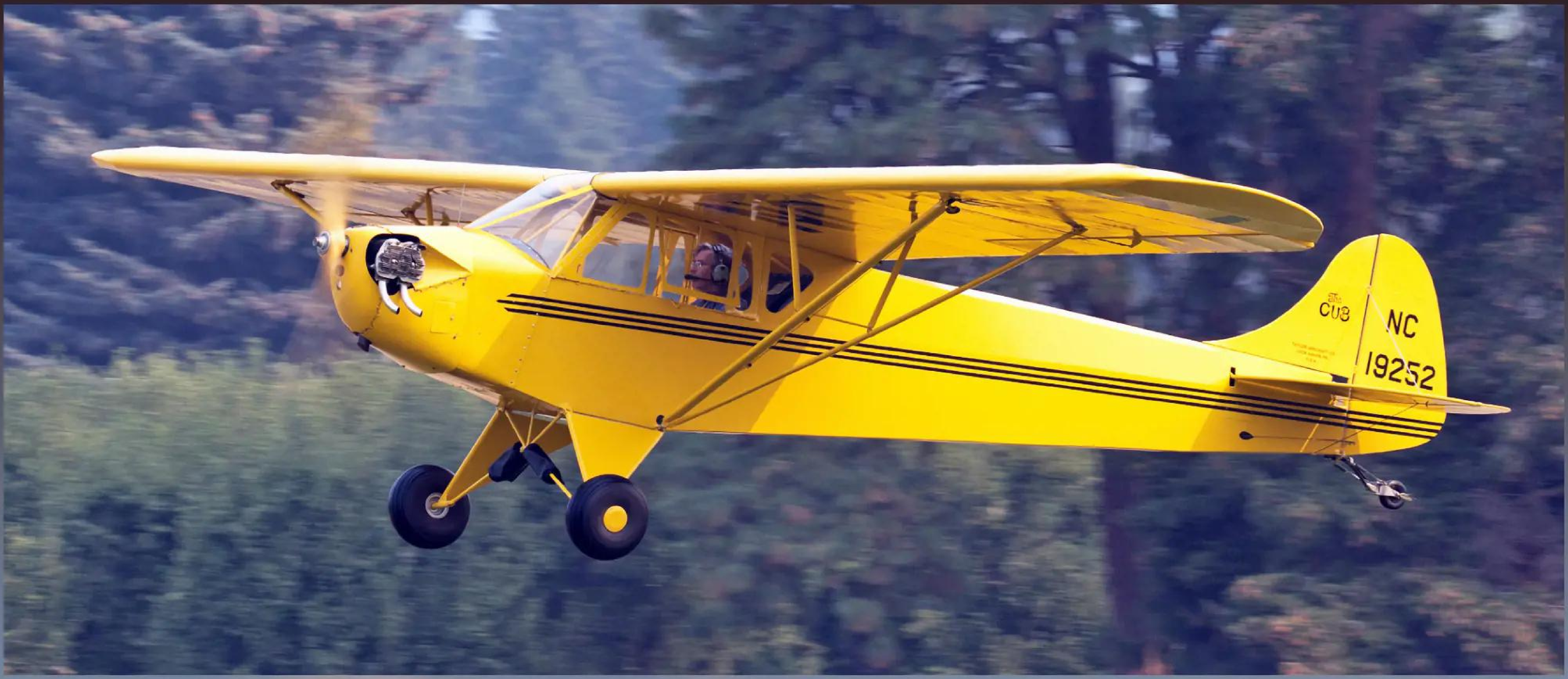
VINTAGE WINGS OVER OREGON

WE VISIT THE ANNUAL FLY-IN AT THE WESTERN ANTIQUE AEROPLANE AND AUTOMOBILE MUSEUM

BY ROGER CAIN

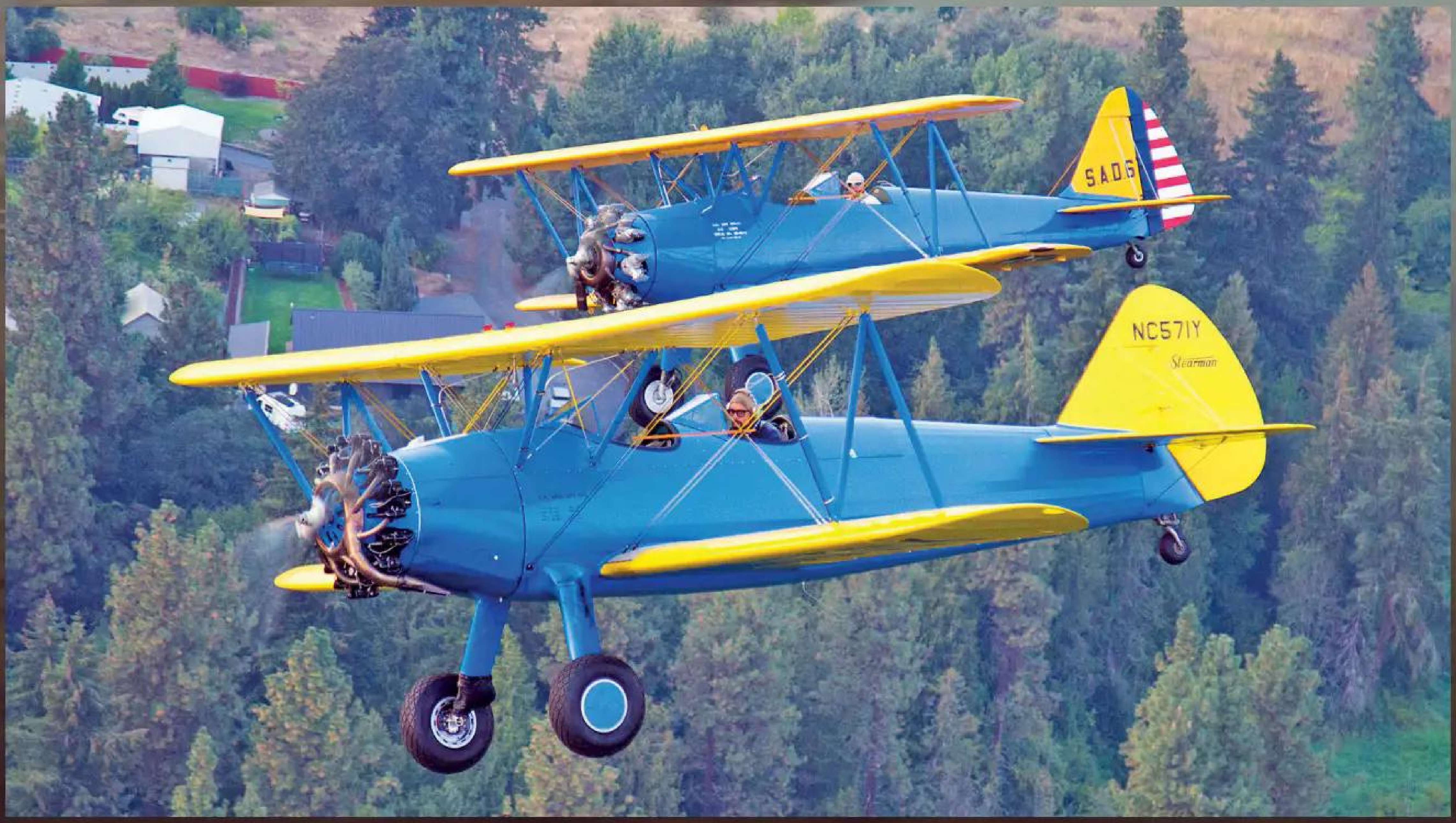


Lars Ljungqvist takes the 1940 St. Louis YPT-15 *Street Car* up for a spin around the field.



Antique Champion Steve Kretsinger of Eugene, Oregon, and his 1937 Piper J-2 Cub, departing for home.

Located a few miles south of the town of Hood River in Oregon, the Western Antique Aeroplane and Automobile Museum (WAAAM) has one of the largest collections of flying aircraft and drivable automobiles in the nation. With the Columbia River that separates Oregon from Washington, the river makes it easy to find the Ken Jernstedt Airfield (named after the famed American Volunteer Group pilot). The 3040-foot paved runway can handle everything vintage on up to small business jets, with a shorter grass runway on the median next to the paved strip. The weekend following Labor Day in September is



In the lead, Scooter Reid in the Stearman 70, with Jay Pemberton on his wing in the St. Louis YPT-15.

Curt and Kim Crowley's 1950 Aeronca 15AC Sedan. The Sedan is a rare aircraft that enjoyed some success immediately after WWII but the dated construction methods could not rival the new aircraft from Cessna and Beech. *Air Classics* owned and operated a Sedan for a number of years and we found it to be a comfortable and affordable vintage plane enjoyed by pilots and passengers.

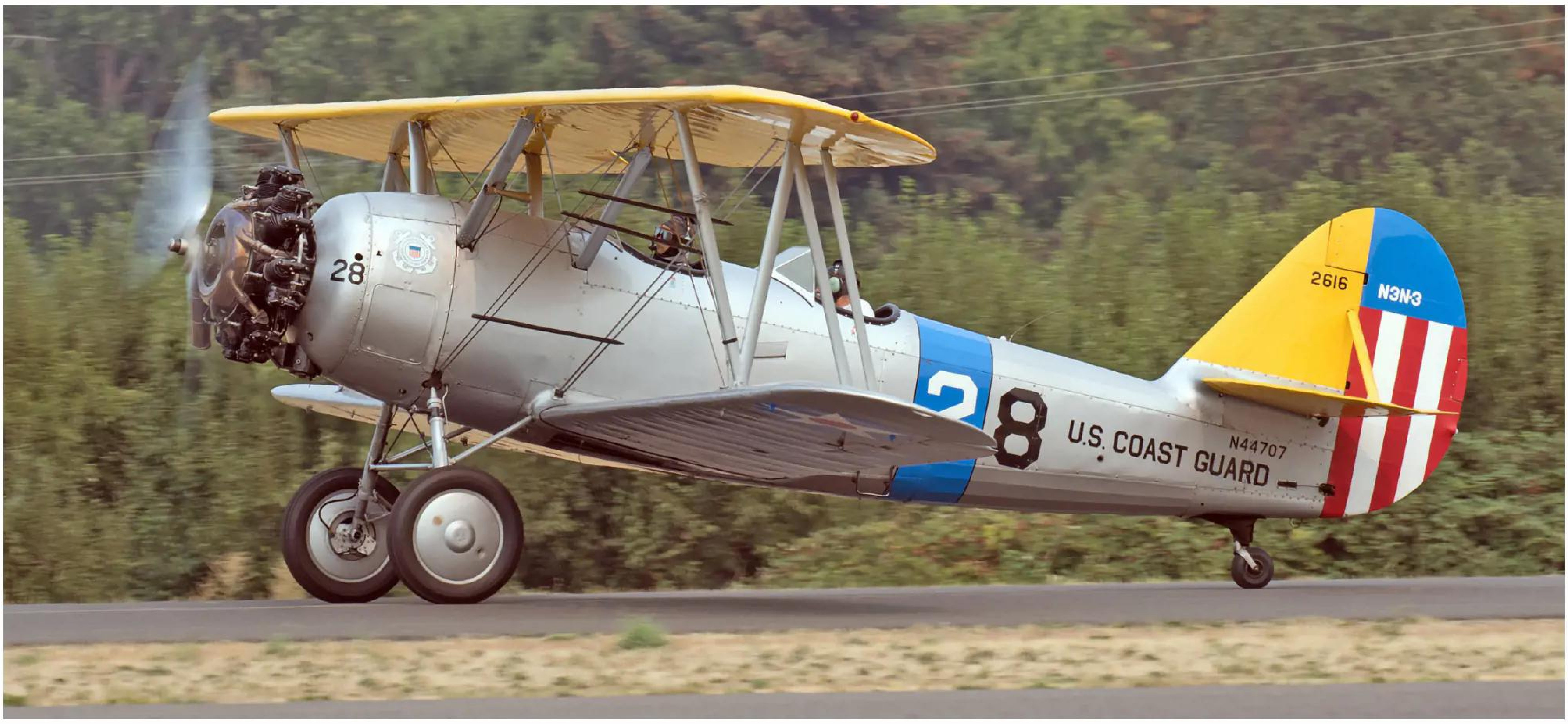
Jay Pemberton with his North American AT-6D was one of three Texan variants on the field.

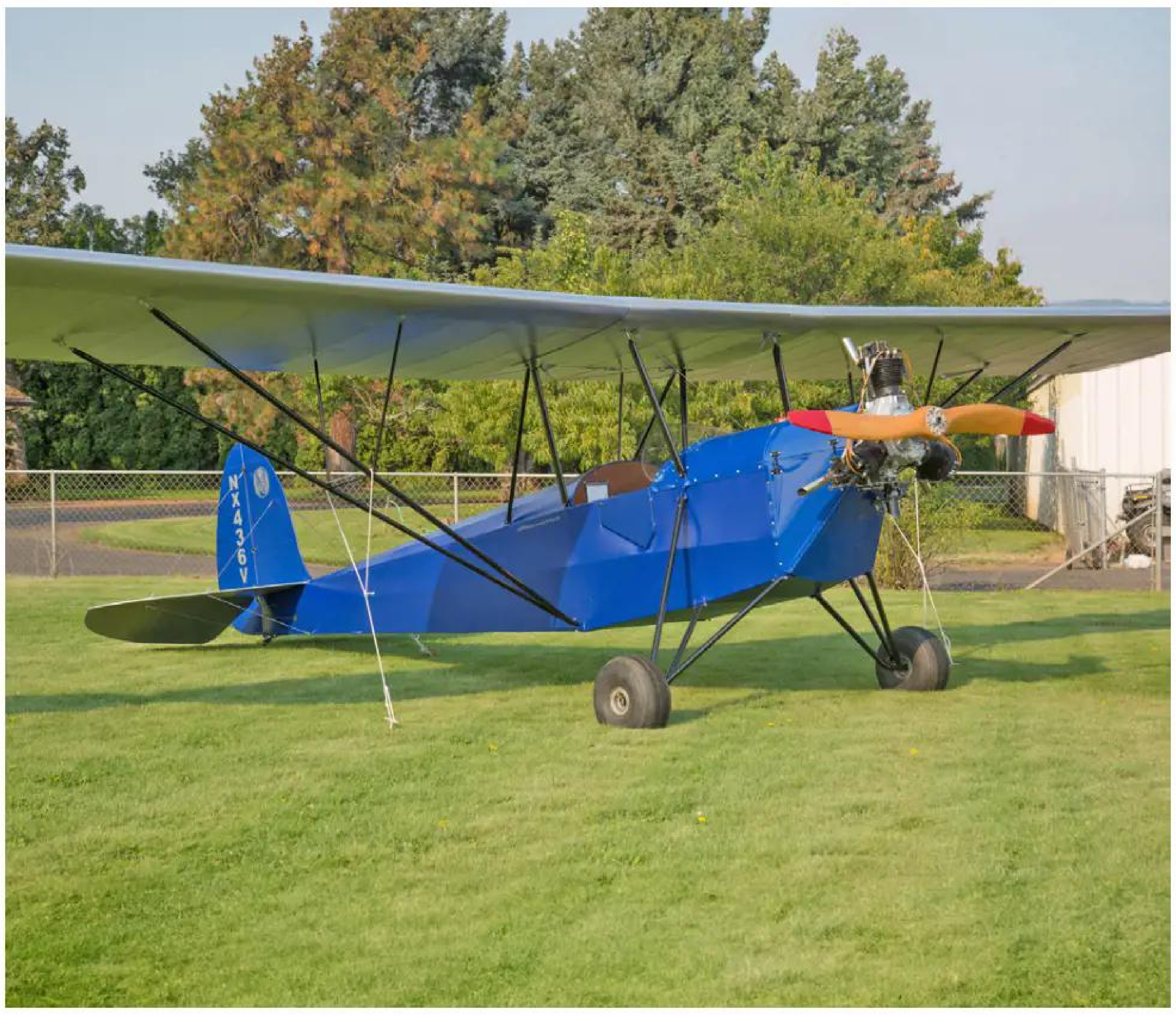
A Cessna L-19A wearing a US Navy scheme. Note the bush tires.

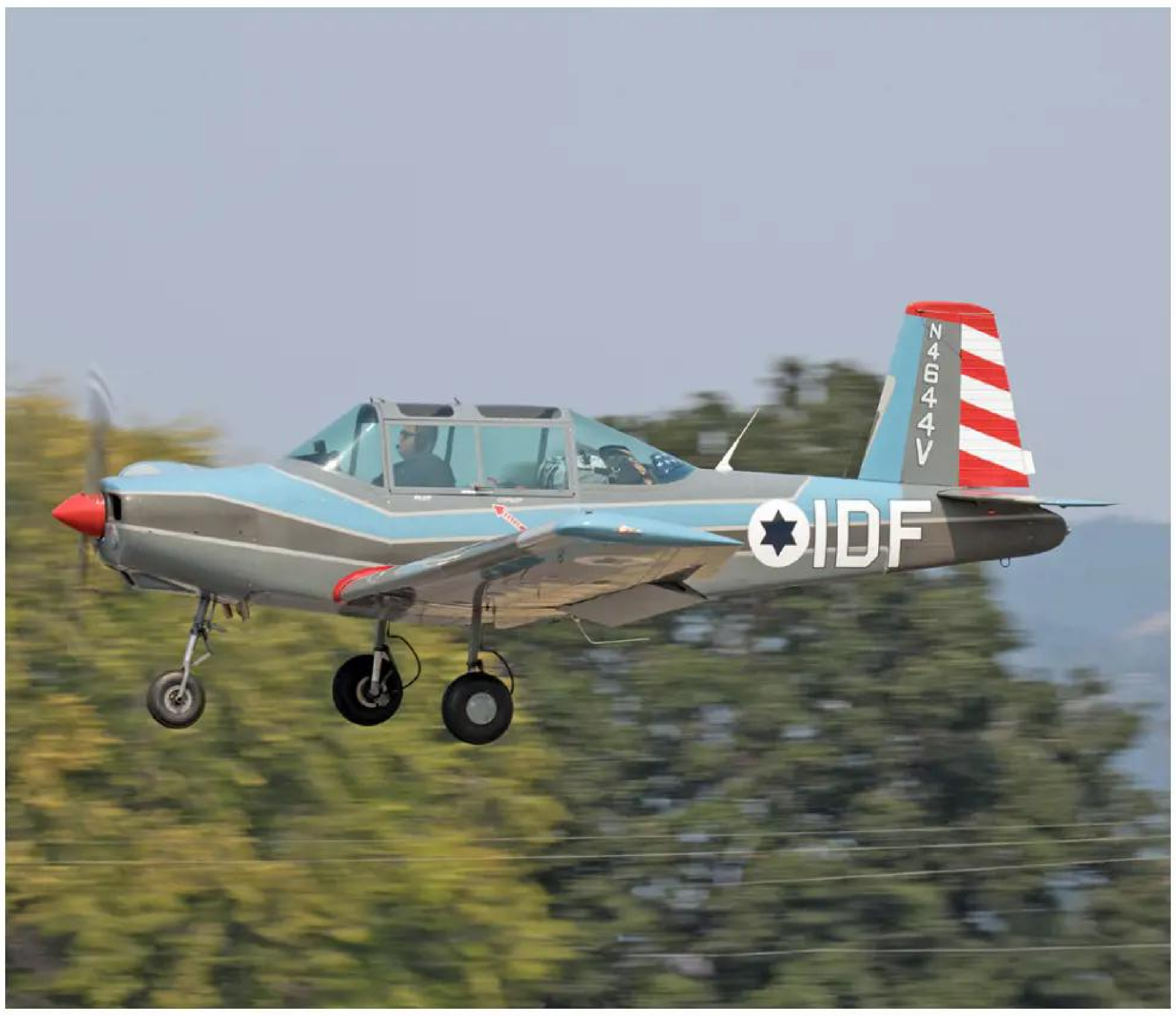
always WAAAM's annual fundraiser and fly-in with no shortage of aircraft arriving from around the west and Canada.

Over the past couple of years, the fly-in has had to deal with smoke from forest fires in the northwestern states, but that smokey overcast did not stop nearly 250 aircraft from attending. WAAAM kept busy with attendees going for rides in their 1930 New Standard D-25 and their Ford Tri-Motor 5-AT-C, with no shortage of riders throughout the weekend.

This event is for the pilots, and many set up tents and camp under the wings of their aircraft. Food and beverages are available at the museum all weekend but a short walk can take you over to a diner

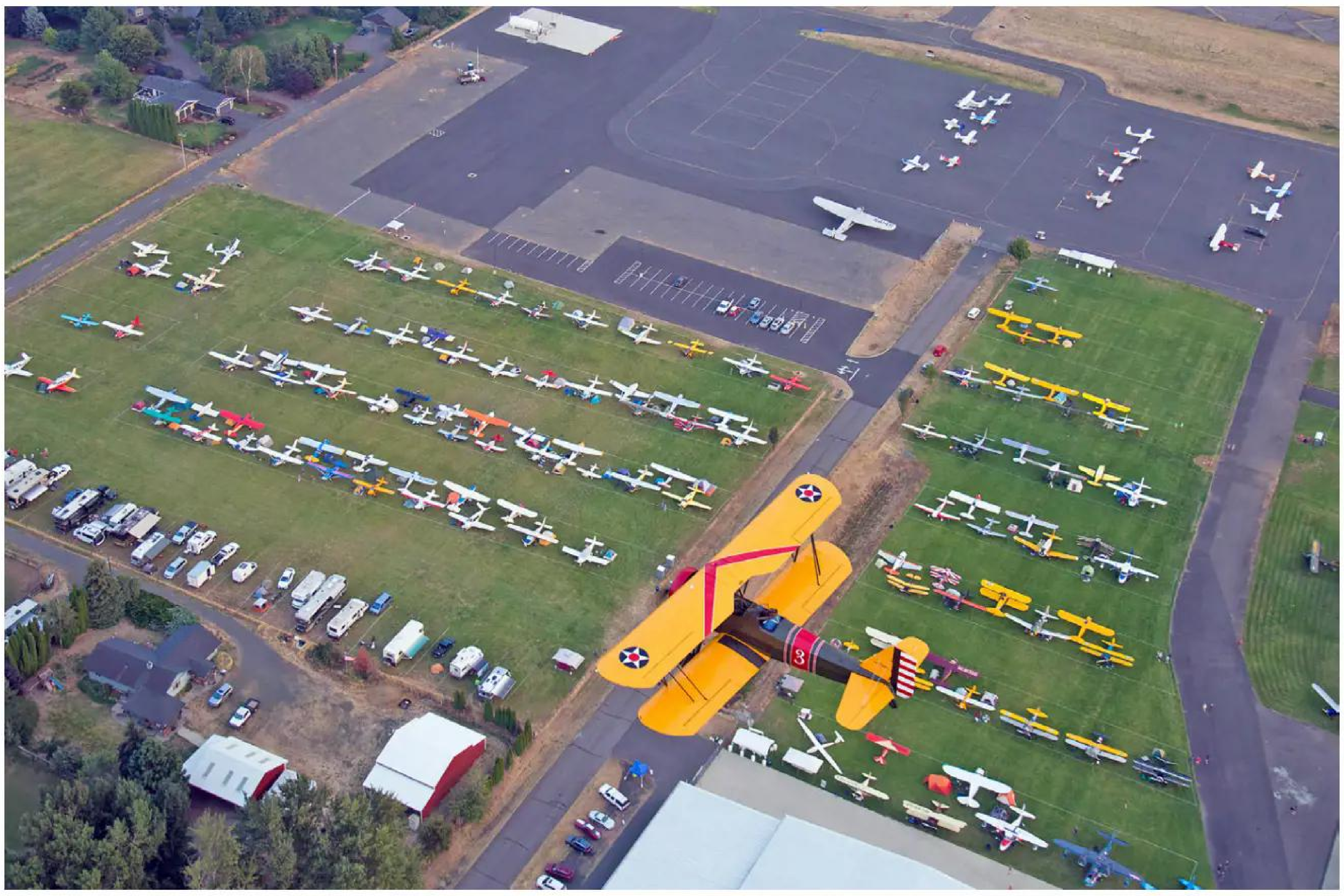

Tom and Maria Jensen brought their Naval Aircraft Factory N3N-3.


WAAAM's recently restored 1931 Nicholas-Beazley NB-8 with a three-cylinder Szekely radial engine.


Now for something completely different — an Israeli Defense Forces scheme on a Varga 2150A Kachina.

off the west end of the runway so you can eat and not miss a flying beat. The event continues as just a fly-in, and it is nice not having to listen to annoying announcers or music blasting through loud-speakers (truly the curse of modern airshows), just the sweet sound of aircraft that are free to come and go at any time. Many pilots take friends and guests up for a flight around the scenic Columbia River Gorge area.

WAAAM always pulls out a few of their aircraft for some Friday night flying, and this year featured three of the rare military biplane trainers in the collection. Jay Pemberton flew the St. Louis YPT-15 and formed up with Scooter Reid flying a 1933 Stearman 70 (see separate story elsewhere in


Cloudboy overflies the Friday arrivals at the WAAAM.

18+

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AVAXHOME -

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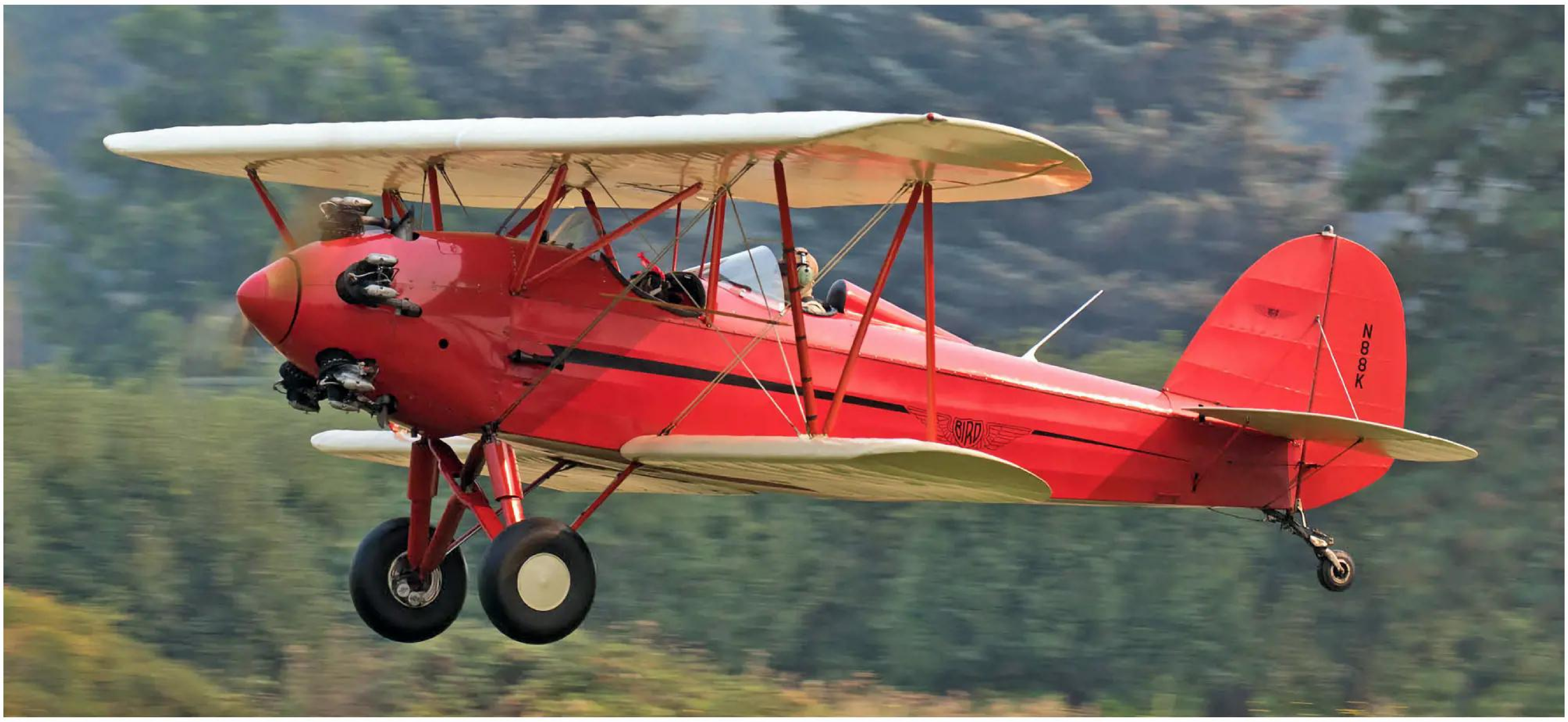
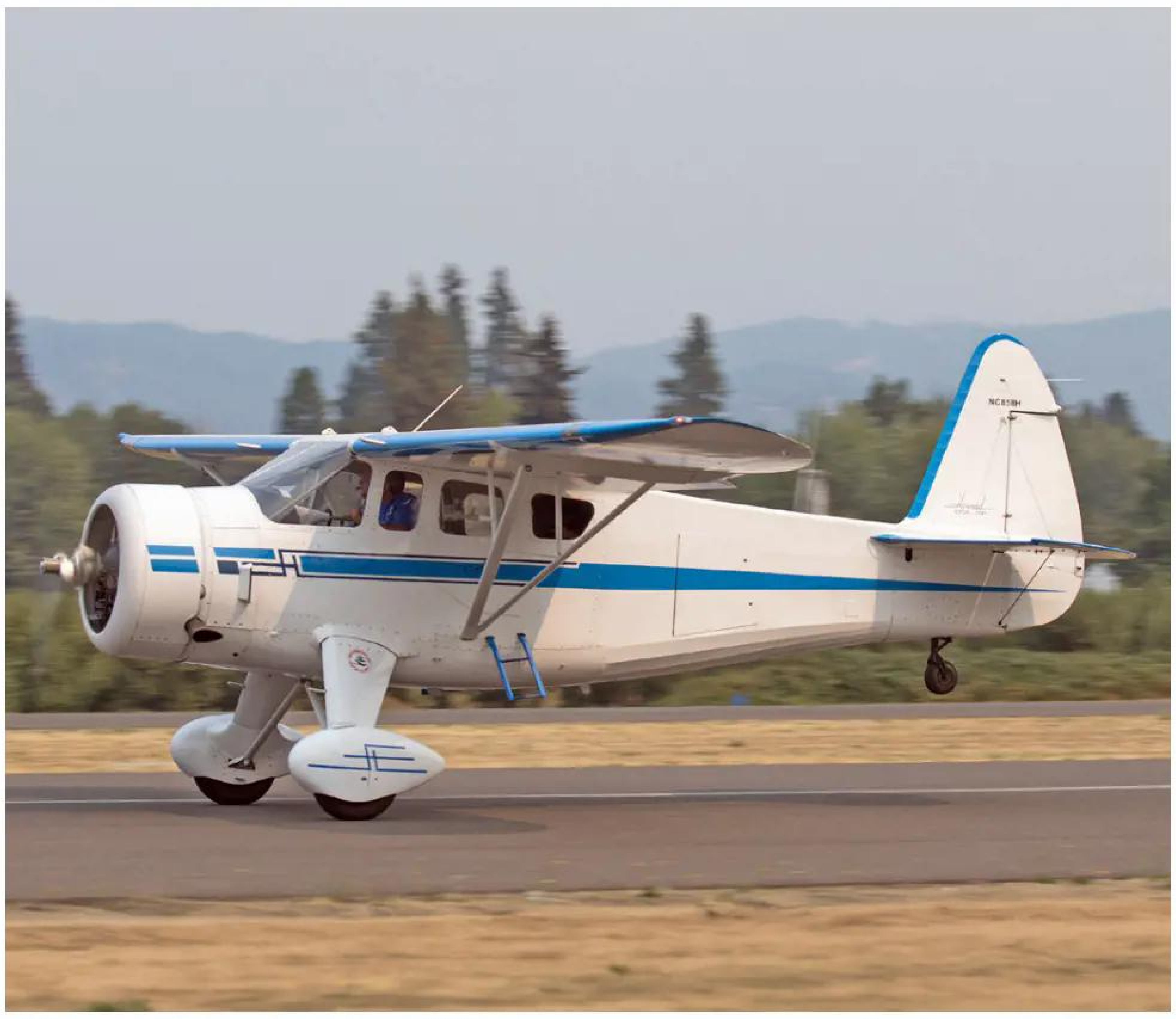
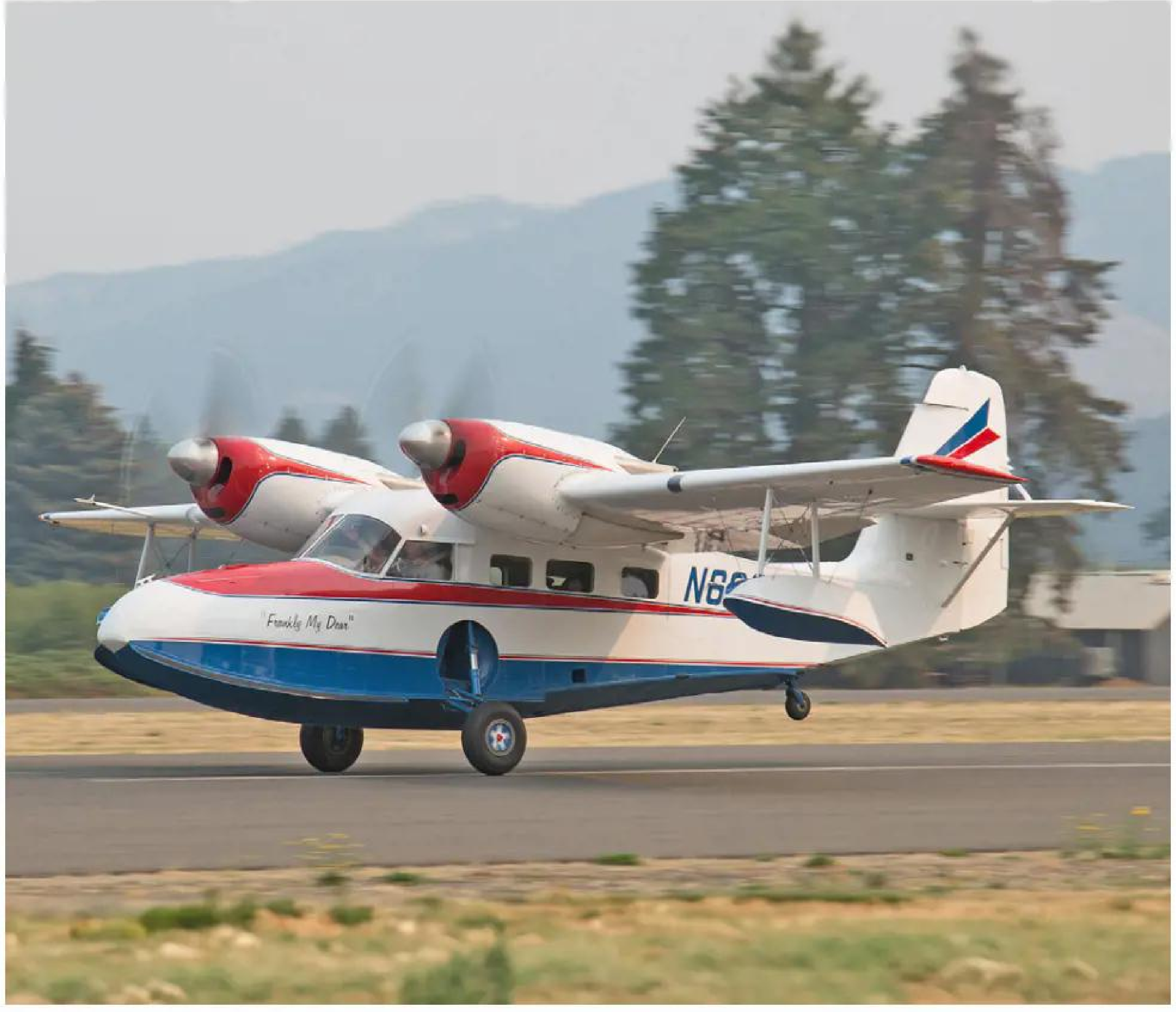


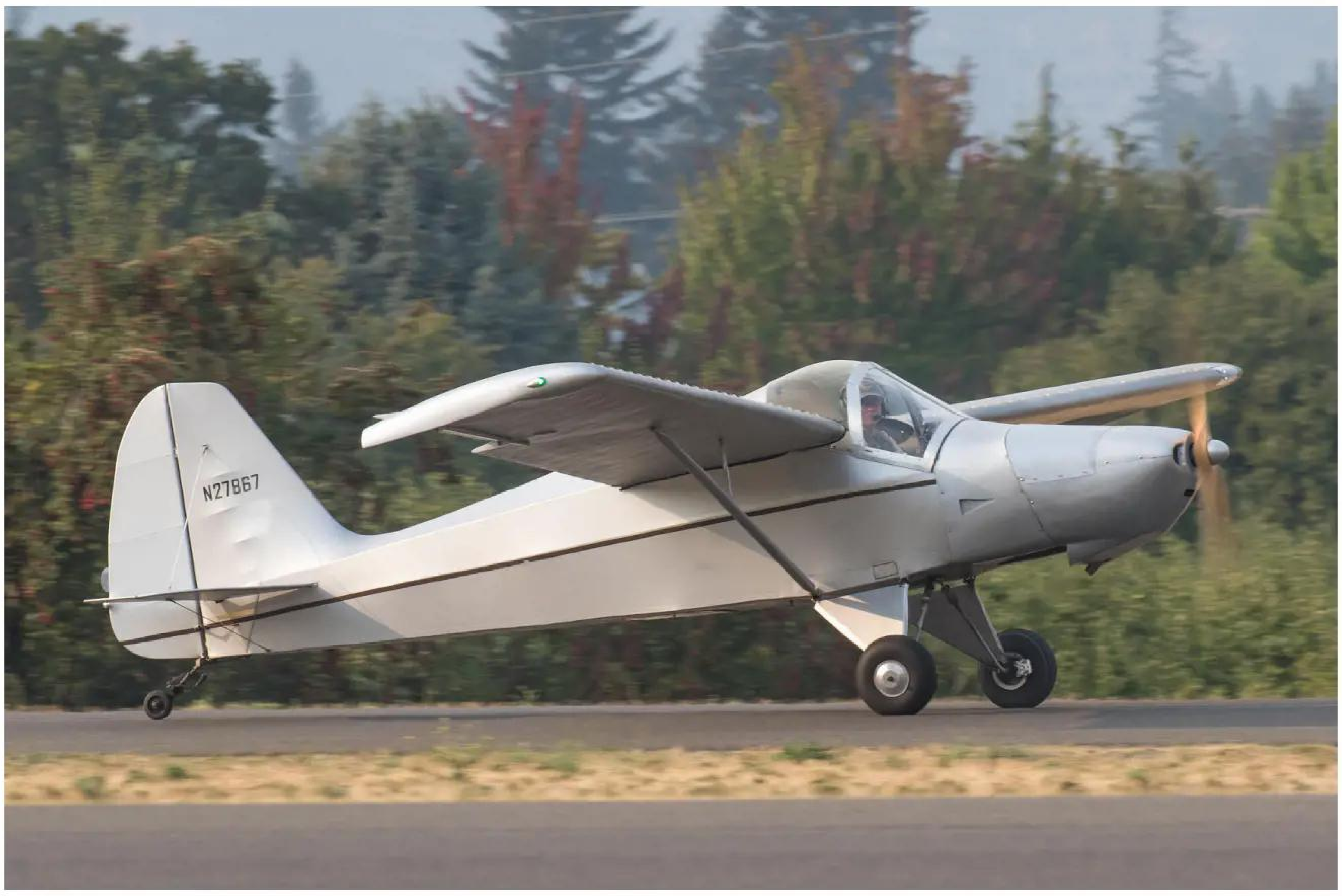
Mathew Northway of Creswell, Oregon, in his Brunner-Winkle Bird A-T. Note the immensely thick upper wing.



Nelson Miguel's Howard DGA-15 was the sole example visiting the fly-in.



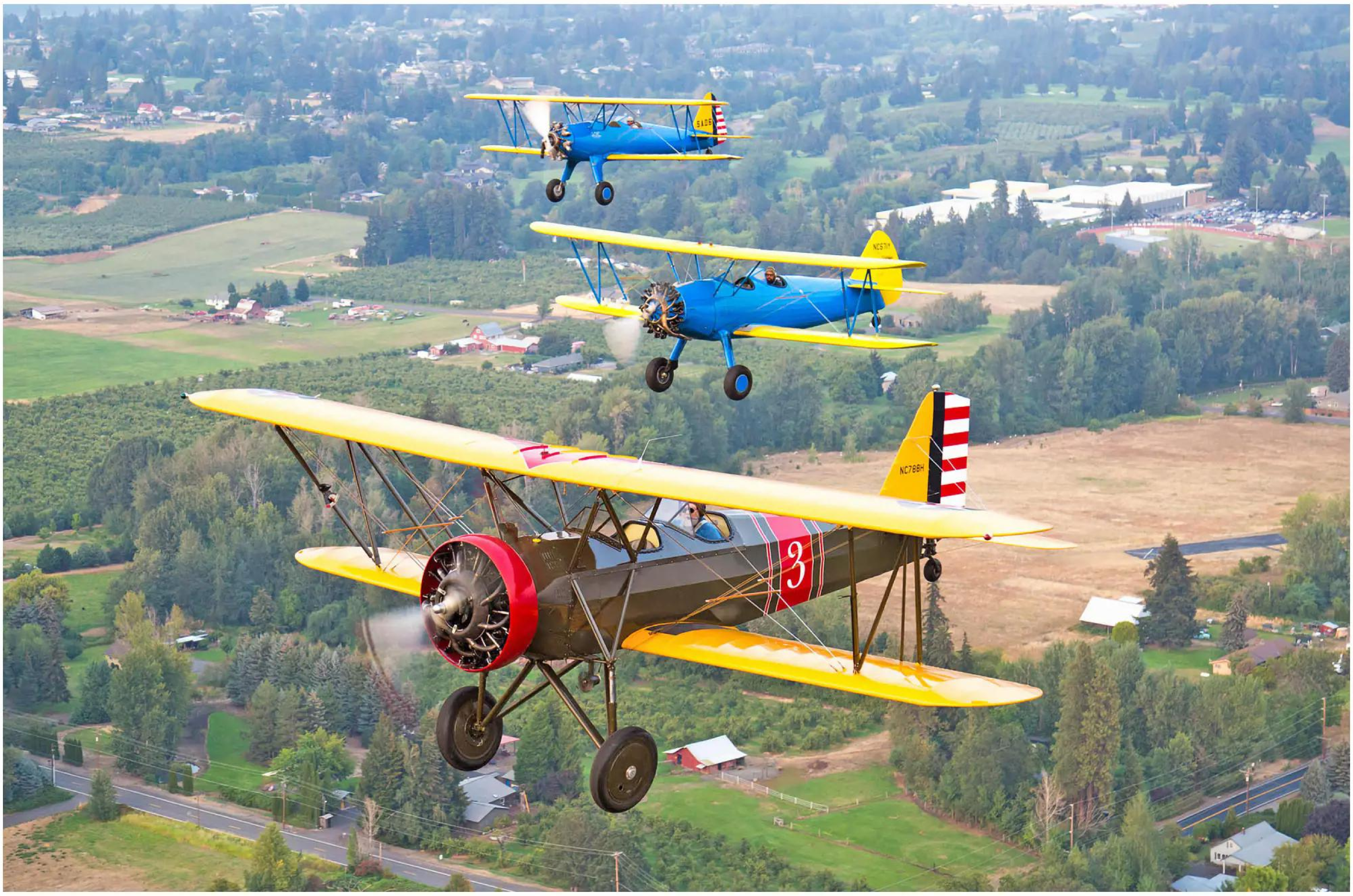
Nikita and Lana Clark of Payette, Idaho, were awarded the Classic Trophy for their Grumman G-44 Widgeon.



The unusual Cygnet 2F-2A is a homebuilt that captures the look of earlier aircraft.

this issue), and then joined up with Wes Valpey in the 1930 Stearman 6L Cloudboy for a three-ship pass over the field. My photo plane for this flight was flown by Lars Ljungqvist in a Bellanca Citabria.

The field and ramp were packed with aircraft and the variety was quite interesting. The main grass area behind the Museum is where all the vintage aircraft are parked — from Stearmans, Naval Aircraft Factory N3Ns, three Grumman seaplanes, Interstates, Aeroncas, Stinsons, Swifts, a pair of Helio Couriers, a couple of Navions and early Cessnas, etc. The field opposite of the main display area had a mix of Pipers, Luscombes, Cessnas, and more modern aircraft such as Vans RVs,



Wes Valpey in the Stearman 6L Cloudboy, leads the formation with Scooter Reid in the Stearman 70 and Jay Pemberton on the outside in the St. Louis YPT-15.

NAVAL FIGHTERS NUMBER 116
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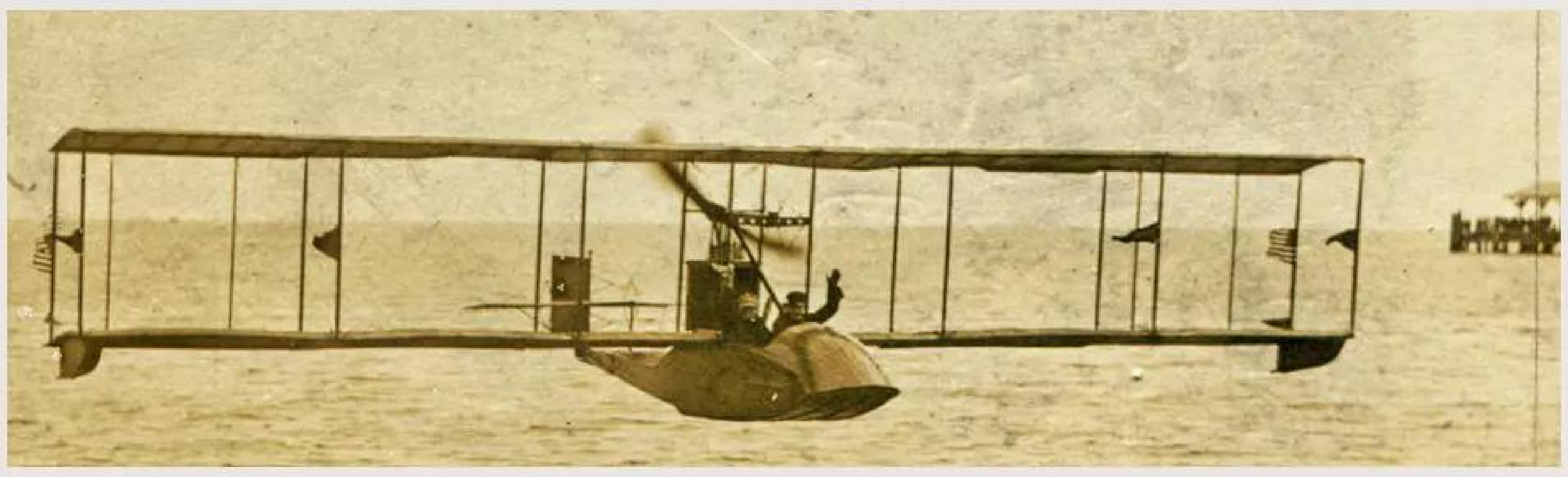
AIRCRAFT OF THE
ST. LOUIS STREETCAR COMPANY
BUILDER OF FORGOTTEN FLYING MACHINES

American flying boat pioneer Tom Benoist in one of his designs.

Obviously, the terms “streetcar” and “aircraft” do not particularly go well together but, in this case, they make a lot of sense. Today, if you visit San Francisco and travel on that city’s famous streetcars, you will see data plates that reference to the fact that many of these vehicles were constructed by the St. Louis Streetcar Company (often referred to as just “Car”). The company enjoyed a great deal of success building railcars and streetcars. What is less known is that the company made a number of rather ill-fated attempts to enter the aviation market.

Going back to the Great War, St. Louis proposed a plan where the company would construct an astounding 5000 examples of a modified variant of the Benoist Type XV flying boat. Tom Benoist, a pioneering aviator from St. Louis, had designed a six-seat flying boat and he had it build in the St. Lous Car factory since he did not have room in his own facility. These aircraft were intended for the British where they would be used for the newly-emerging mission of anti-submarine patrol. By this time, the British had pretty much committed to the designs from Curtiss and a couple other companies and the project quietly folded after a projected merger with Benoist did not come to fruition.


Benoist XIV in flight.

Curtiss JN-4D at the St. Louis factory.

Army C-6 observation balloon of the 116th Observation Squadron at Fort Lewis, Washington. St. Louis built the car that contained the crew and engine.

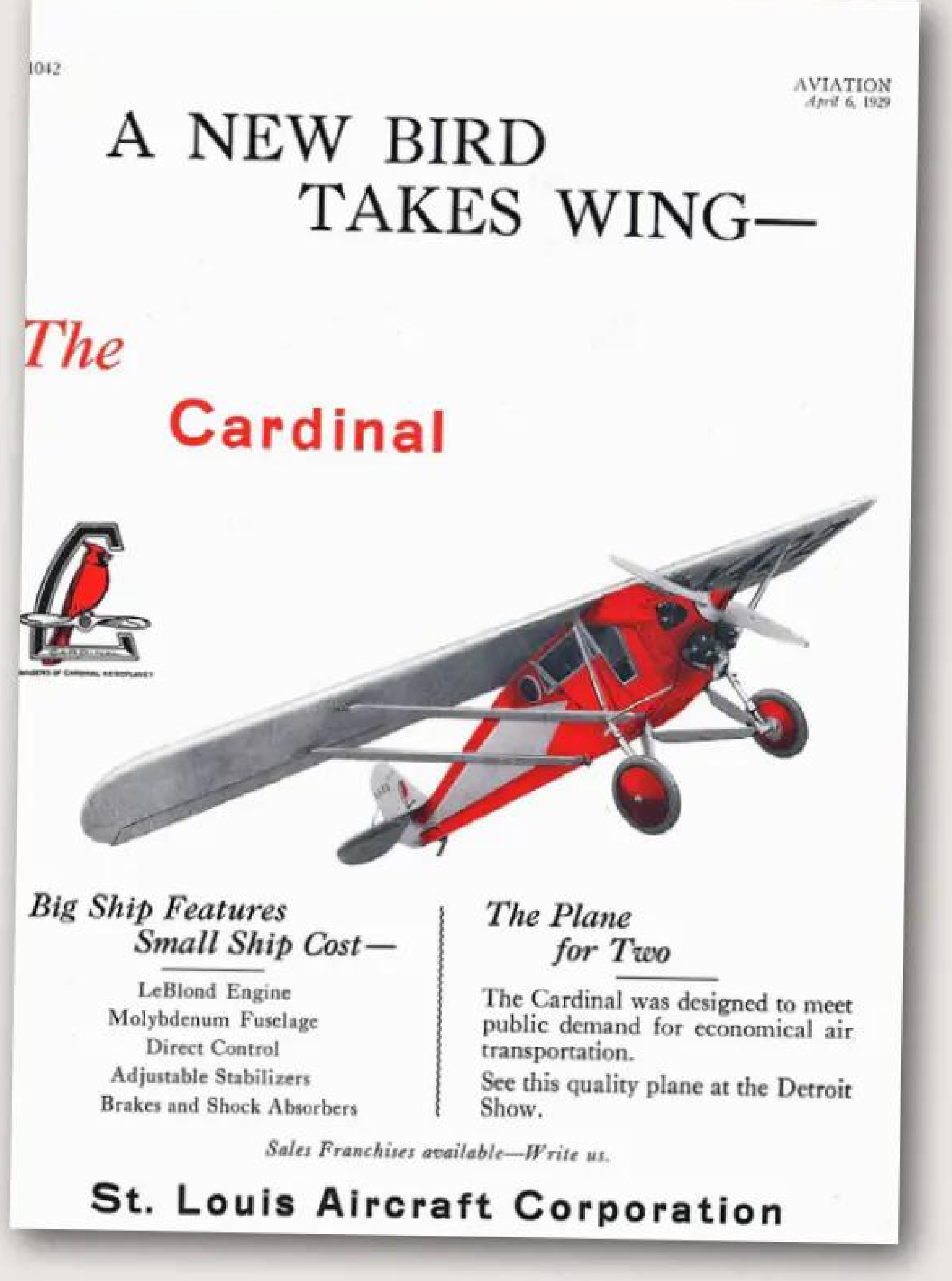
A bit later on in that war, the company established the St. Louis Aircraft Division (joining with Hutting Sash and Door Company) in 1917 to produce Curtiss JN-4D trainers under license (this was at a time when it seemed almost every company in the USA was engaged in building the lumbering biplane). Some 450 JN-4Ds were built. With the end of the Great War, the division seemed to either shut down or revert to a miniscule operation as it attempted to win contracts but it seems the only thing created was the suspended crew cab of the Army’s C-6 motorized observation balloon.

With the success of Charles Lindbergh’s transatlantic flight of 1927, America suddenly became “air-minded” and there was a rush to build both commercial and private aircraft. Reorganized as the St. Louis Aircraft Company, the two-seat C-2 Cardinal series of light high-wing monoplanes was designed and built. It seems that around 20 of these attractive little aircraft were constructed between 1929/1930. Produced in seven different variants, the Great Depression caused the company to once again shut down. The Cardinal was eclipsed by the Monocoupe and the Curtiss Robin.

As global tensions increased during the 1930s, the company came alive again (it had been eking an existence building parts on military contracts) and built the XPT-35, which was a tandem biplane aimed at the burgeoning military primary trainer market. Completed in 1935, St. Louis hoped to win an Air Corps contract and the single-prototype was given the registration NX11778. Fitted with a Wright R-760 radial of 225-hp, the plane did not last long as it crashed (presumably during testing) at Wright Field.

Apparently, some Air Corps officers felt that the basic design had potential so a replacement aircraft, designated PT-1W, was ordered. Flying as NX18068, the plane was given the military designation of XPT-15 and tested during 1939/1940 but by this time the Boeing Stearman Model 75 Kaydet had been ordered and would be produced in the thousands.

Testing of the PT-1W/XPT-15 continued and the Air Corps decided to order a pre-production batch of 13 machines as YPT-15s (Air Corps pre-production aircraft were almost always produced in a quantity of 13 machines and received the “Y” to the designation). All were delivered in 1941 and all but one went to the Parks Aeronautical


1042

AVIATION
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Of all the St. Louis designs, the Cardinal had the greatest potential but production was shut down by the Great Depression.

College in Cahokia, Illinois, where they were efficient trainers but the Kaydet had completely dominated the market and production of the PT-15 would remain at just 13 aircraft.

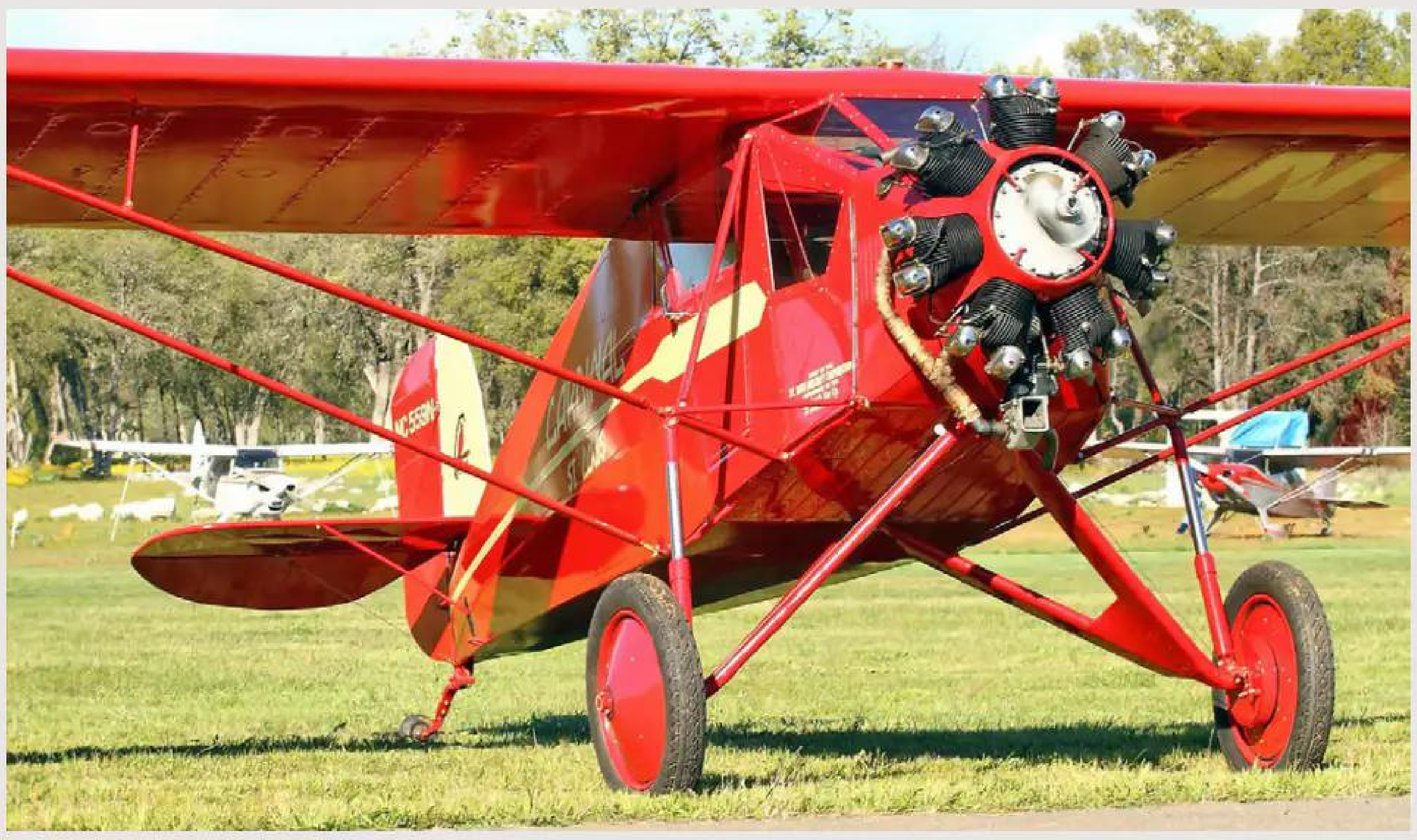
Still trying to remain active in the aeronautic field, the company designed and built another training machine in 1940. This was the tandem low-wing monoplane PT-LM-4 that was registered as NX25500 and was powered by the same Ranger engine fitted to the Fairchild PT-19 series of trainers. Tested by the Air Corps, NACA, and the RCAF, orders were not forthcoming. Once again, it was a case of too little, too late. The PT-LM-4 failed to win a contract but the company became a licensed sub-contractor for the Fairchild trainer and would build 350 examples divided between the PT-19A (44) and PT-23/PT-23A (306). The company had created its own flying field adjacent to the St. Louis Car factory and, known as Ross Field, it remained operational for a time after WWII.

It seemed that St. Louis was fated to imitate rather than create and when interest in large combat gliders came about following German successes using such gliders, St. Louis designed the eight-seat gull-wing XCG-5 (company designation SL-5) and the XCG-6 that had 15 seats. Test pilot Howard C. Blossom (who flew a number of the large experimental gliders for different companies) took the first XCG-5 aloft from Lambert Field in St. Louis but problems were immediately encountered. There were aerodynamic concerns and it also seemed that the structure of the craft was not sound. It is unclear if any more flights were undertaken but the military cancelled the XCG-5.

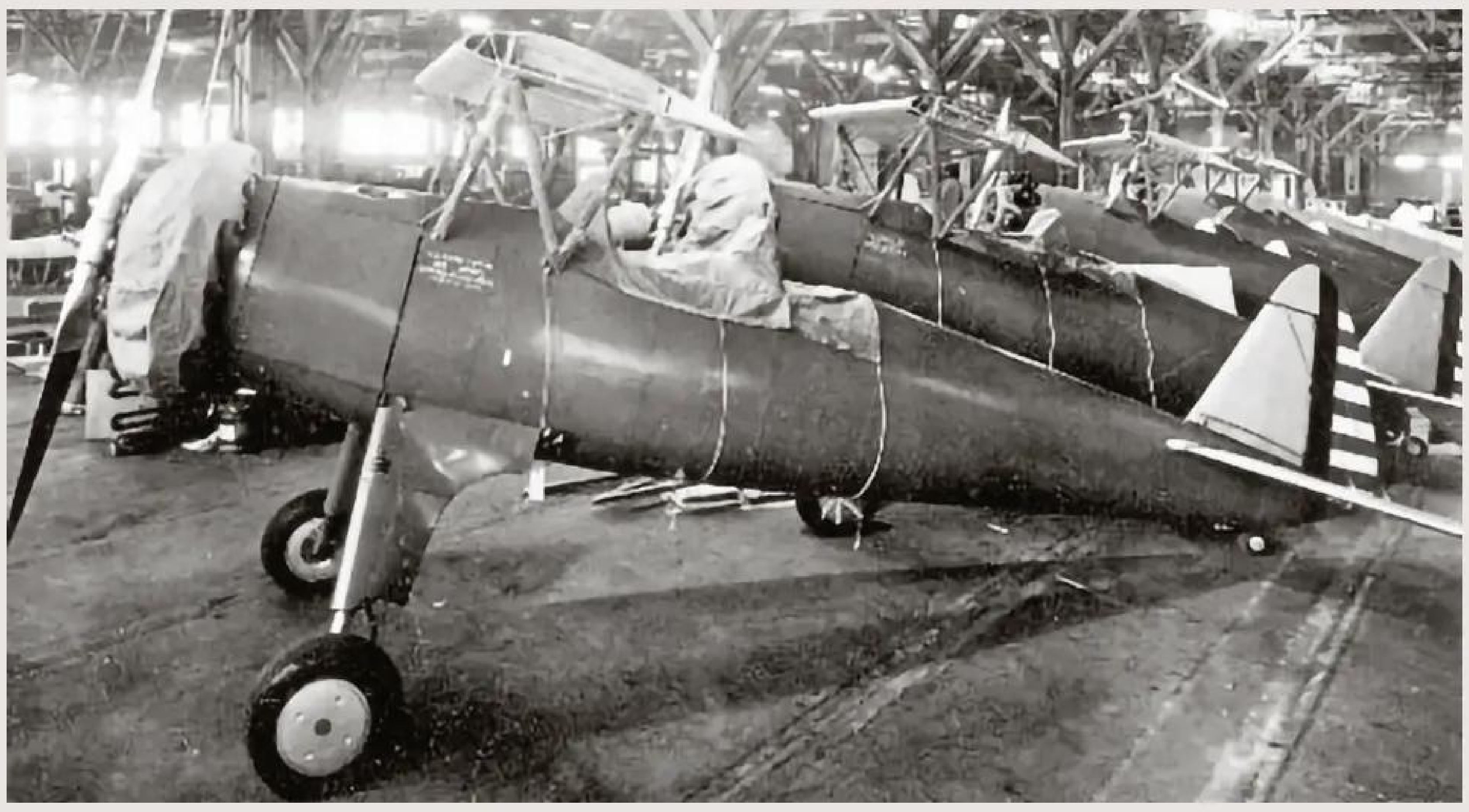
The larger XCG-6 seems to have built as just a static test example and was not proceeded with after serious structural problems were encountered during ground testing. By the end of WWII, St. Louis Aircraft once again went dormant. It completely disappeared when the parent company closed its doors in 1973.

With the end of the war (perhaps even before then), some surplus YPT-15s were offered for sale on the surplus market. One or two were converted to crop dusters and operated in Arizona. “I clearly remember the YPT-15 when it was owned by Bob Deford in Prescott, Arizona,” stated veteran pilot and restorer Addison Pemberton. “Registered N106SC [Air Corps serial 40-006], Bob would bring it to the annual Cactus Fly-In at Casa Grande, Arizona. Many years, I would fly formation with him. At the time, the Street Car had a Wright R-975 under a full cowl along with an airshow paint scheme. The old *Plane and Pilot* magazine had an article on the plane called “Street Car Named Desire.” Bob eventually sold the plane during the late 1980s and the new owner ground-looped it on one of his first flights (this happened on 30 November 1989 at Creve Coeur, Missouri. The pilot said that he lost directional control during the landing roll. The left wing dug into the ground and the plane came to rest nose down. The pilot said he was landing directly into the sun and may have had visual problems). The aircraft sat for many years until WAAAM got it and Terry Brandt and his craftsmen returned the Street Car to its original Air Corps configuration and paint along with the original Wright R-760-8 of 235-hp.

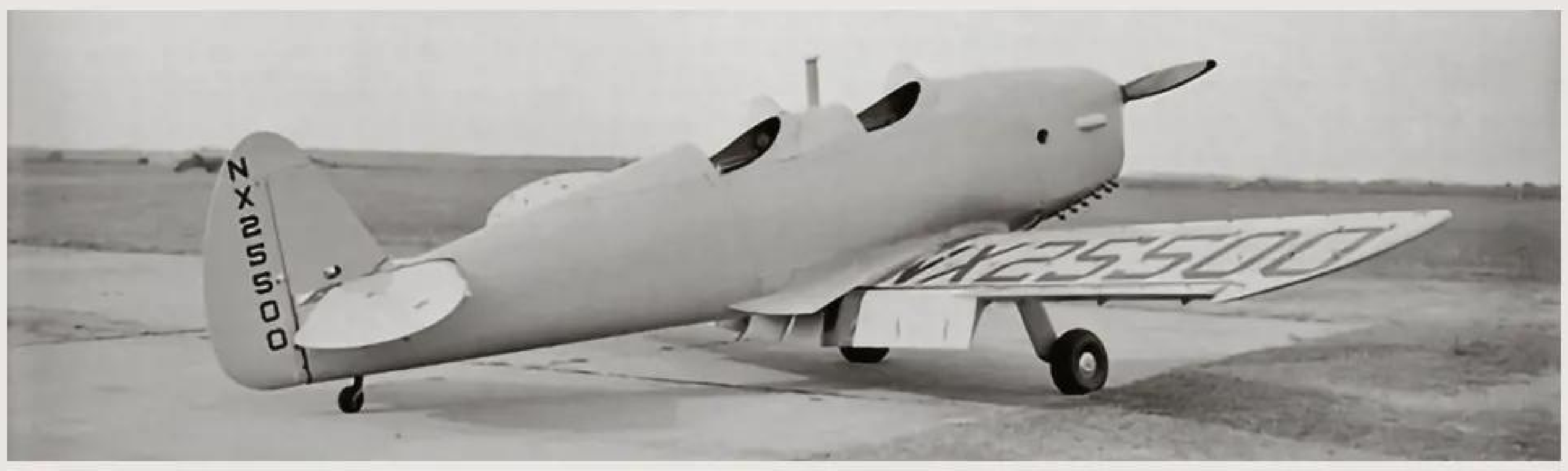
“I had done the test flight on the WAAAM Model 70 and had been looking forward to flying the YPT-15 and this year I got the chance to do that along with my son Jay. We found the airplane delightful with lighter ailerons than the Stearman along with a good power to weight ratio. In my opinion, the Wrights really make good power. The YPT has great handling and its runway habits are very typical of the type. It is a well-behaved aircraft. The only slightly negative thing that I noticed was that because of the monocoque fuselage, there is an aluminum bulkhead near the rudder pedals and that does slightly impede rudder pedal access. This required a bit of duck-foot action to use the pedals at full travel without conflicting with the bulkhead – similar to what you find with the Ryan PTs and ST-As. Other than that, it is a magic little aircraft.”



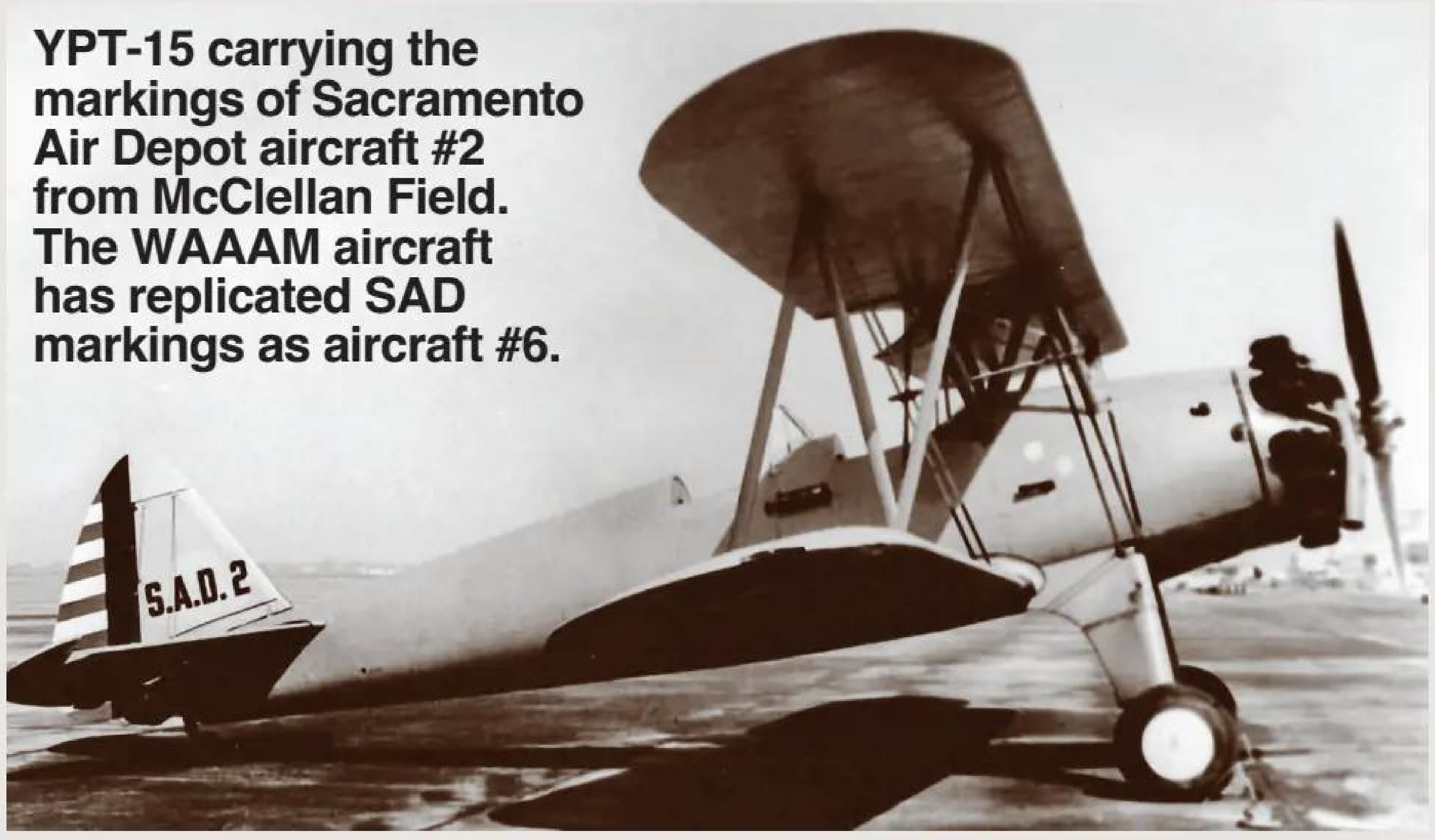
Powered by a LeBlond radial, this Cardinal is still airworthy. It is thought four Cardinals survive.



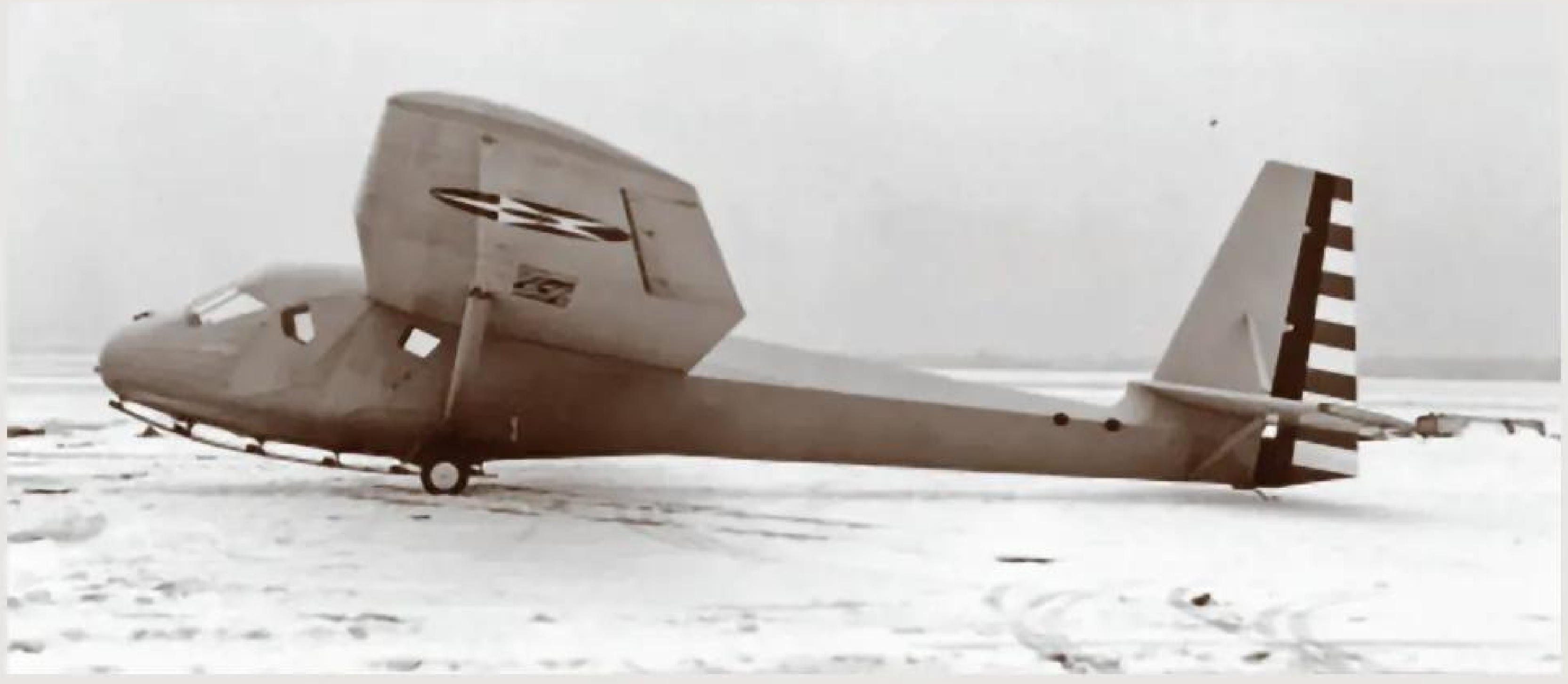
YPT-15s under construction at the factory.



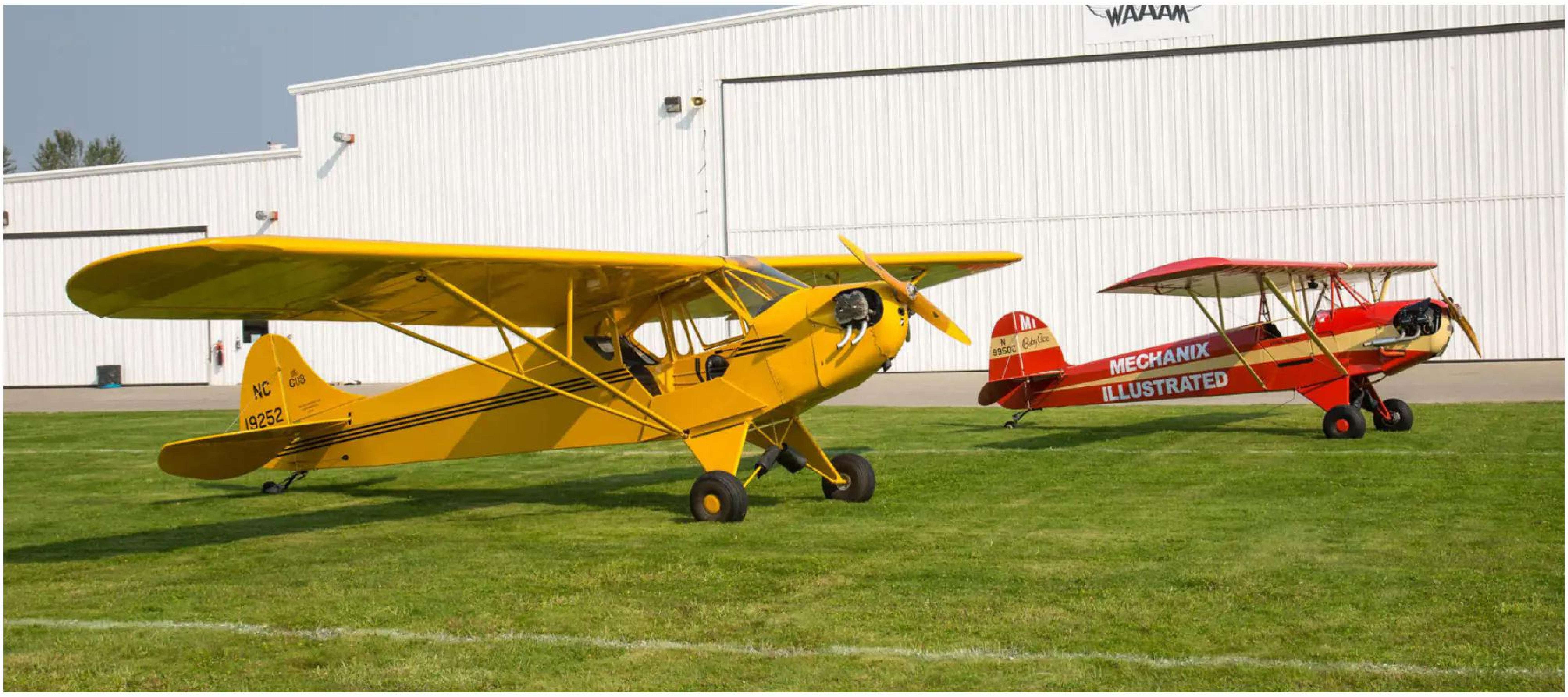
The PT-LM-4 would lose out to the Fairchild PT-19 series.



YPT-15 carrying the markings of Sacramento Air Depot aircraft #2 from McClellan Field. The WAAAM aircraft has replicated SAD markings as aircraft #6.



It is unclear how many flights the XCG-5 made, but given the plane’s aerodynamic and structural problems it was probably very few if indeed more than one. Test pilot Howard Blossom stated that the design would need to be completely redone and that construction quality of the craft was inferior.



A unique pair of aircraft: EAA Founder Paul Poberezny learned to flying in Kretsinger's J-2 Cub and Chris Lehner's Corben Baby Ace was the last plane the founder of the EAA started to build.

Just about to touch down, and not on floats, is a de Havilland DHC-2 Beaver.

Two Stampe SV-4s were present including this one powered by a 180 hp Superior Air Parts XP-360.

Helen and Chris Lehner display their two trophies with the Luscombe Phantom.

homebuilts, and other experimentals. Besides the aircraft, the museum hosts several seminars aimed toward pilots and safe flying.

Following the big Saturday night dinner are the awards, with both the Grand Champion and the People's Award going to Chris and Helen Lehner with their 1934 Luscombe Phantom 1. The Antique Aircraft Trophy went to Steve Kretsinger and his 1937 Piper J-2, and Biplane Trophy was awarded to Andrew Lohmar with his Great Lakes 2T1A. The Classic Trophy went to Nikita and Lana Clark with their 1942 Grumman G-44 Widgeon. The Warbird Trophy was given to Andreas Blech with a Max Holste MH-1521 Broussard, and the Homebuilt Trophy

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Each model features authentic details and includes a retracted or deployed landing gear, optional press-fit fuel tanks, and display stands. Measures 5.5"l with a 6.25" wingspan at 1:72 scale.

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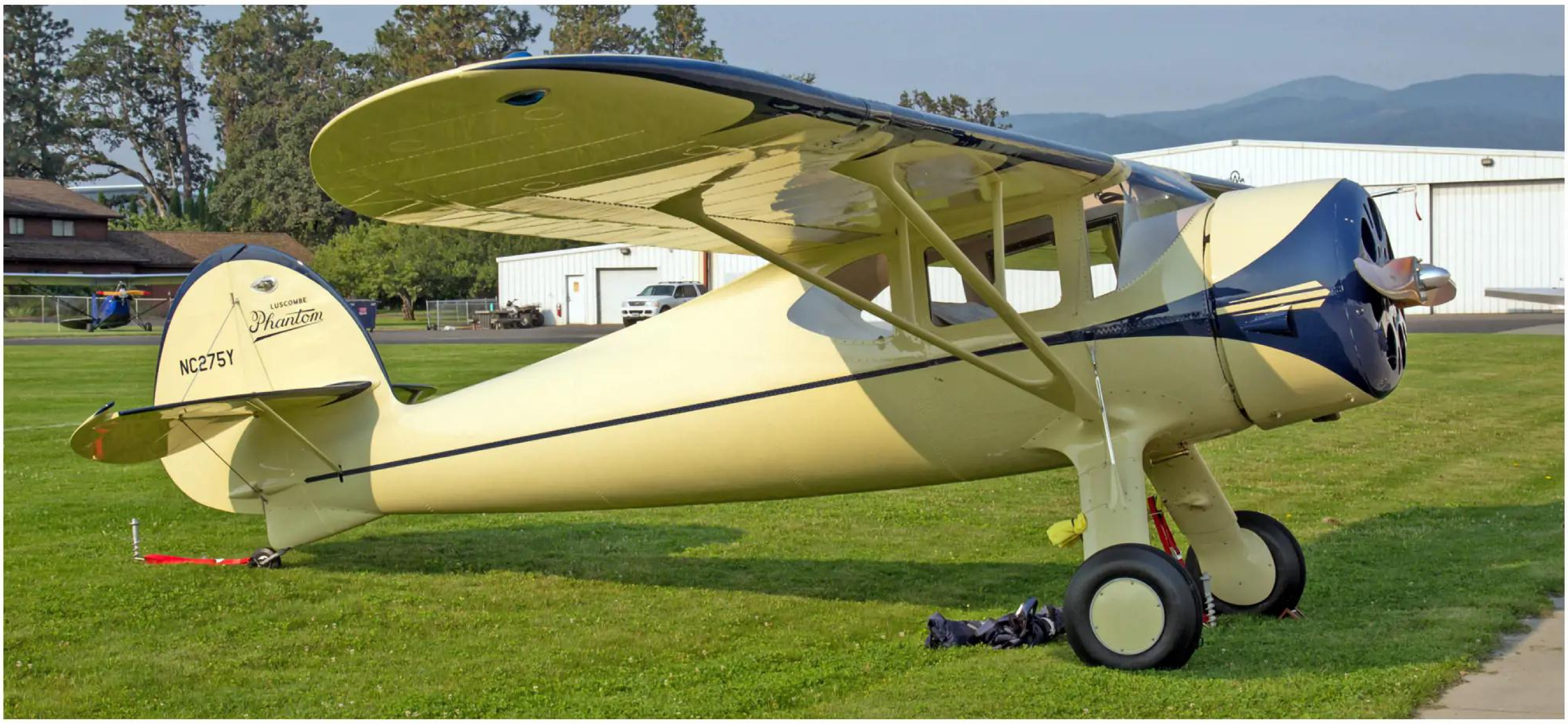
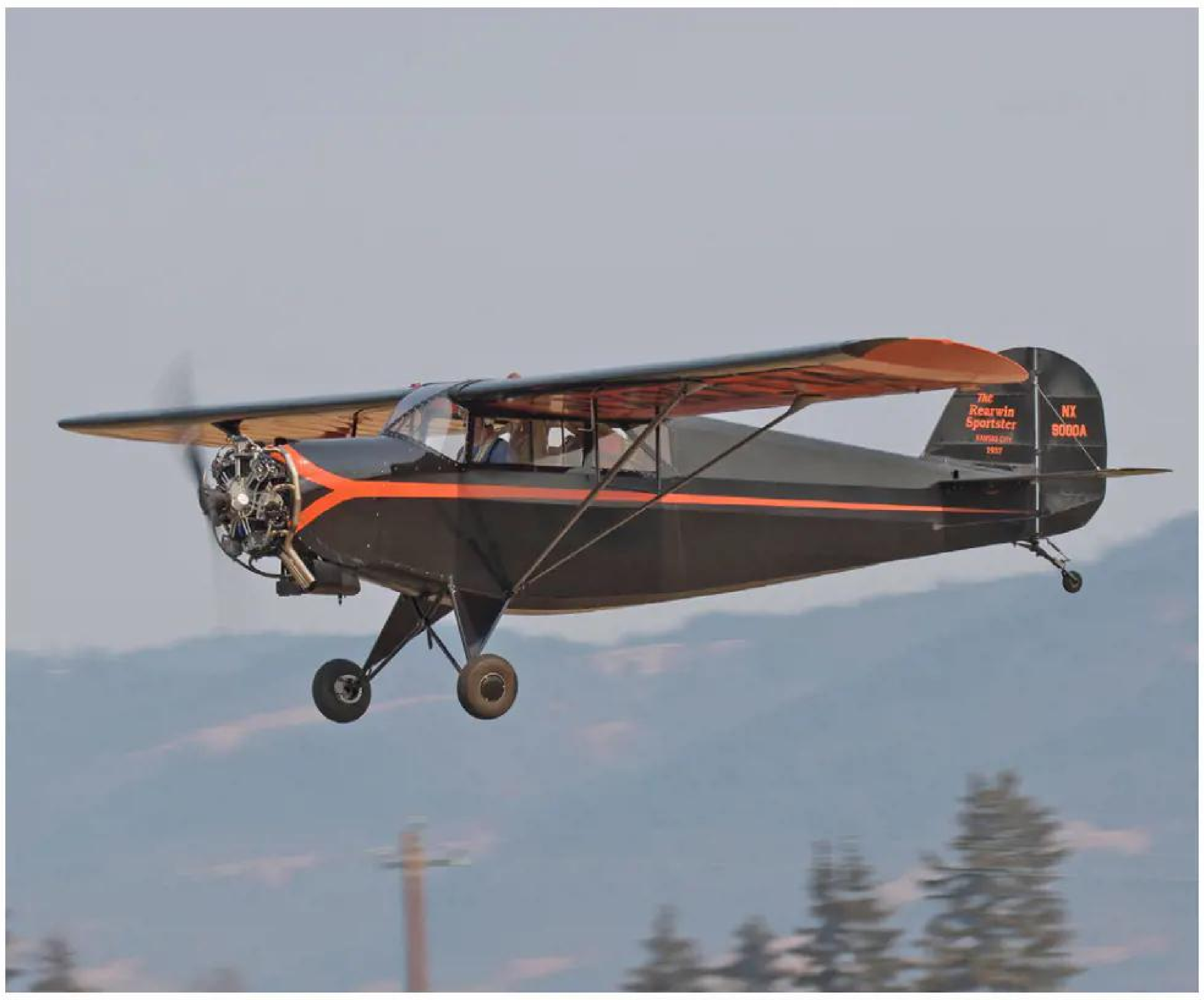
Andrew Lohmar with his Great Lakes 2T1A received the Biplane Trophy. Note how the original paint design enhances the appearance of the aircraft.

A Curtiss Jenny and Thomas-Morse Scout share space on the floor of the WAAAM's 150+ aircraft collection.

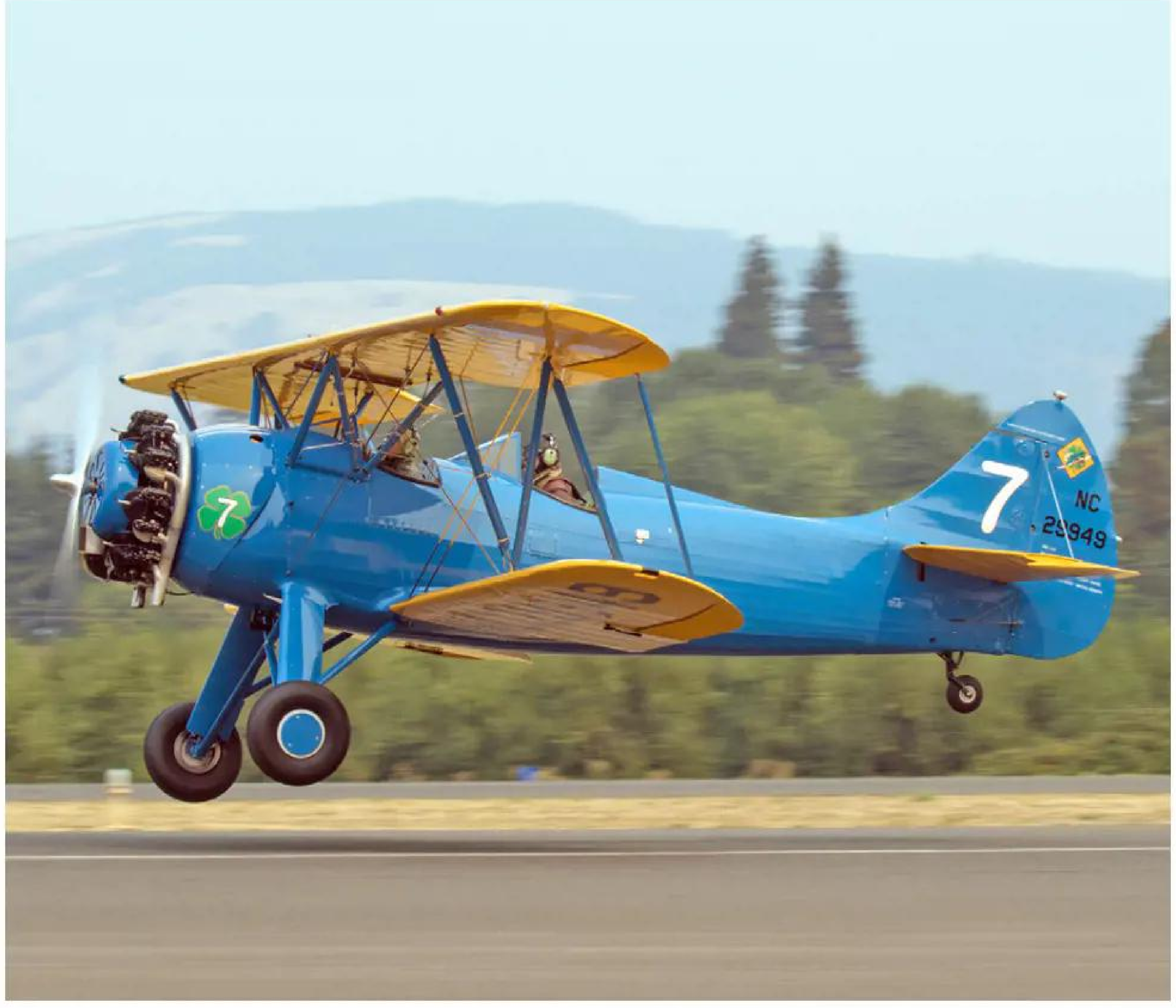
Stampe SV-4E N3956 has had it original Renault engine replaced with a Lycoming IO-320 engine. Aircraft is finished in French *Aeronavale* markings.



The very rare Luscombe Phantom 1 received the Grand Champion and People's Choice trophies.



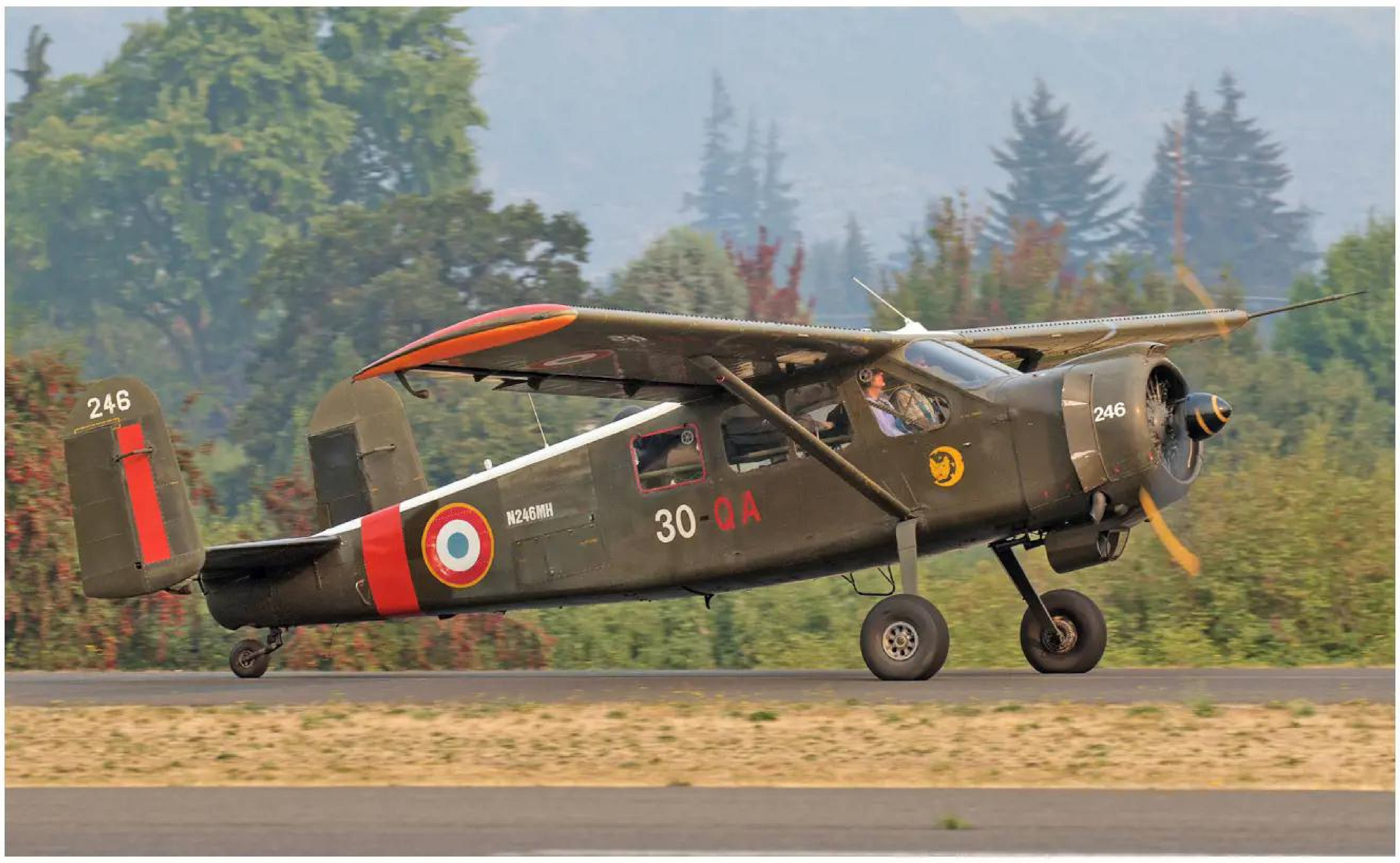
Herb Brayton's 1937 Rearwin Sportster 9000A uses a modern-day Verner radial engine for power. Using new engines is a growing trend among the vintage aircraft set.



The only Waco on the field was this 1940 Waco UPF-7 that was used at three different flying schools during WWII.

was given to John Middleton with his 2017 Bearhawk. Of interest, Kretsinger's Piper J-2 is the same plane that EAA Founder Paul Poberezny learned to fly in, and Chris Lehner also had a Corben Baby Ace on show that was the last plane that Poberezny started to build, but never finished.

While Sunday morning is a departure day for the aircraft, the Museum's docents bring out a number of their very early automobiles take visitors for a tour of the grounds and remaining aircraft. The area is fortunate to have a good number of volunteers and sponsors that make the WAAAM museum and fly-in a success. Thanks to Lars Ljungqvist for flying the camera plane for the aerial photos. **AC**



Andreas Blech took home the Warbird Trophy with the MH-1521 Broussard, wearing French military markings. The aircraft is sort of the French version of a de Havilland Beaver.

AIR CLASSICS

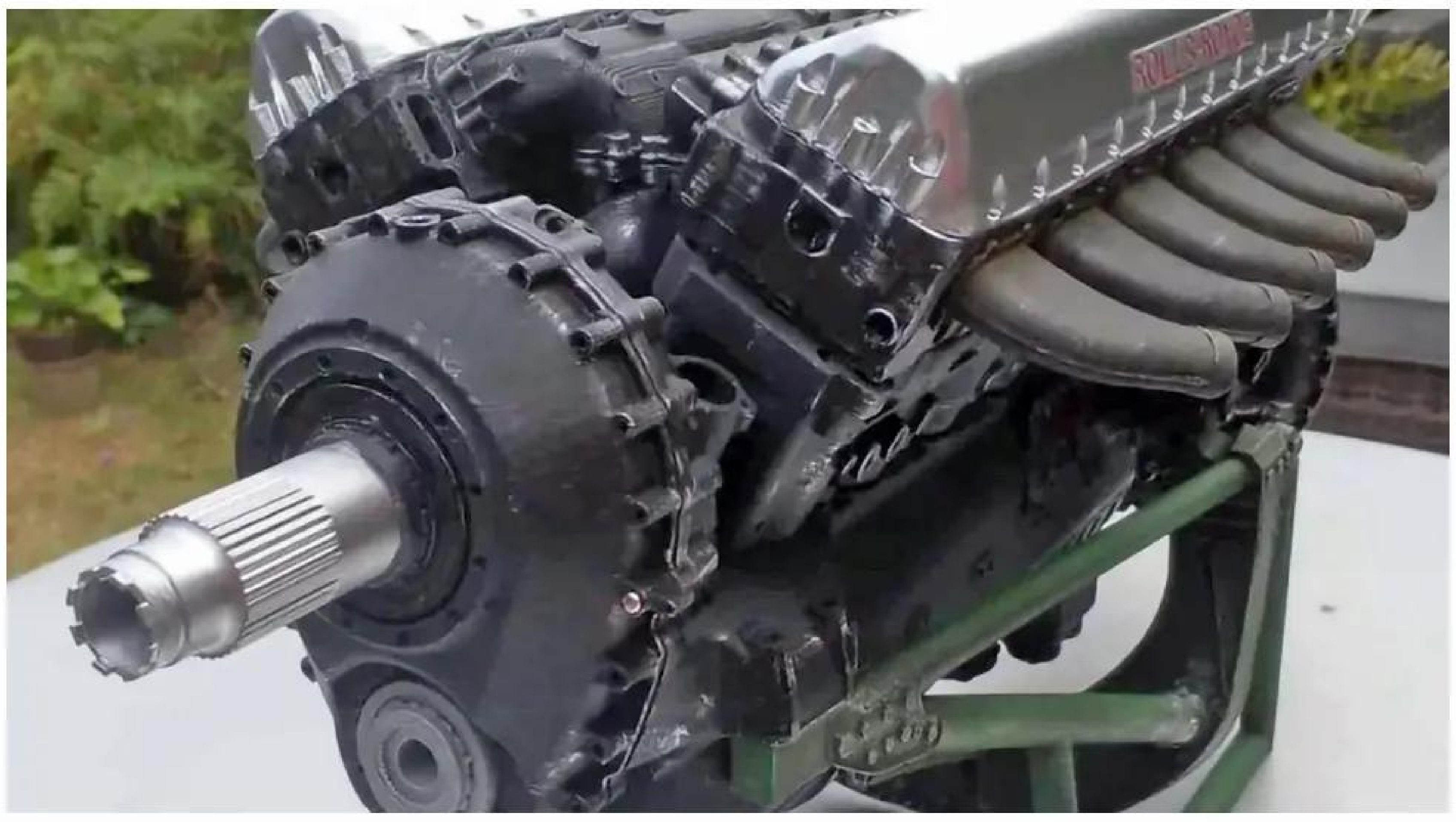
CHRISTMAS GIFT GUIDE

A VARIETY OF GREAT ITEMS TO PLEASE EVERY AVIATION ENTHUSIAST

BY SUSAN DUPREY

The one-quarter scale Merlin engine.

The engine can also be obtained as a kit for self-assembly.


At almost 23-inches in length, the Merlin makes for a most impressive model.

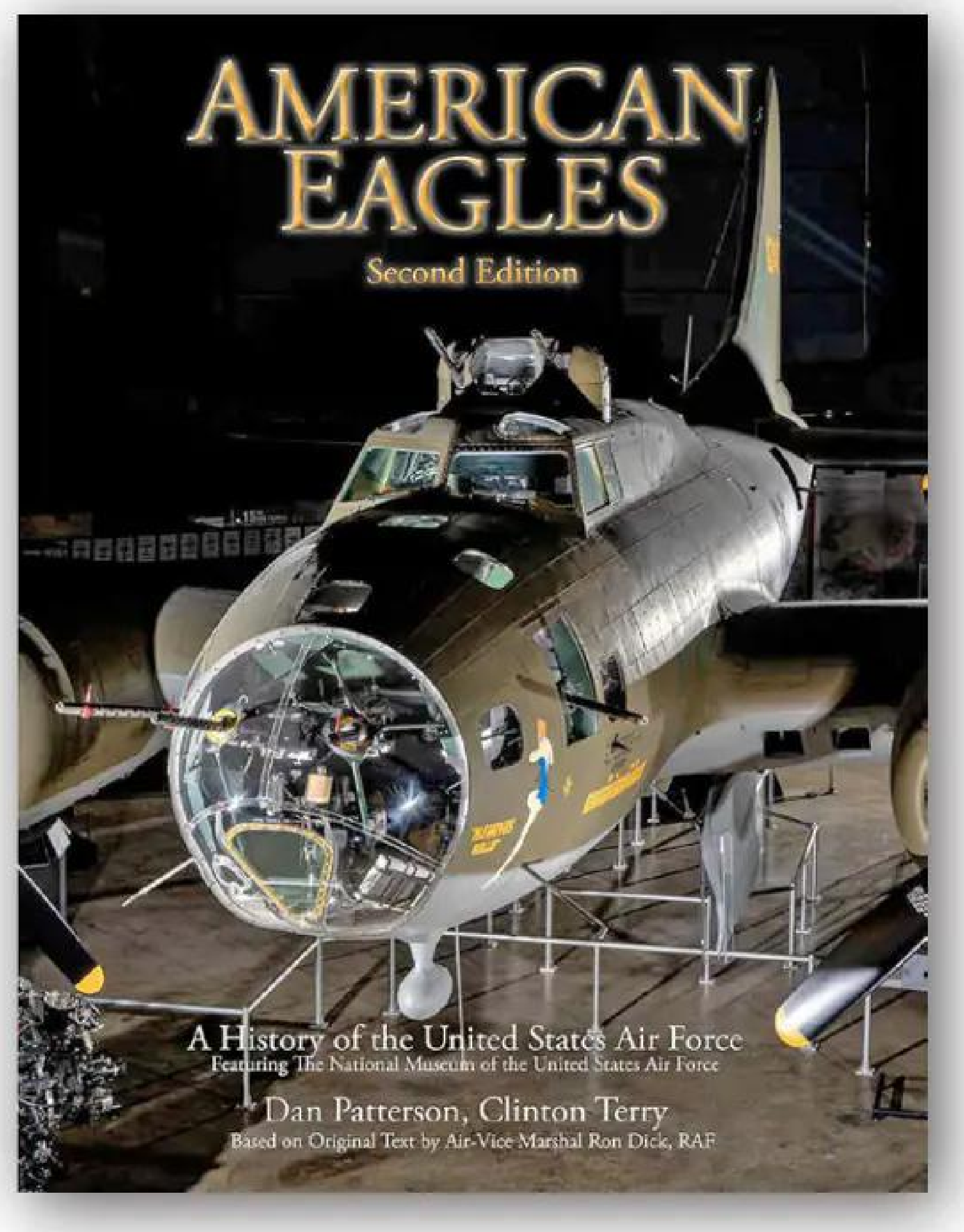
Profits from the Merlin model go to help complete restoration work on Spitfire AA810, whose fuselage is seen in a jig.

SCALED MERLIN ENGINE

You can now have your own one-quarter scale Rolls-Royce/Packard V-1650 Merlin — the engine that helped win WWII. Plus, profits from this incredibly detailed model all go to a very good cause — the restoration of a Supermarine Spitfire. The Packard V-1650-7 is the American-built version of the Rolls-Royce Merlin. Its most notable application was to power the mighty North American P-51 Mustang into battle. A wonder of engineering immortalized in aviation history, this liquid-cooled V-12 has become synonymous with power, speed, and a pioneering era of aviation development that led to ultimate victory over the Axis powers. This model has been created as part of the United Kingdom-based restoration to flight of Supermarine Spitfire AA810. Profits from the model will support work on the *Great Escape* Spitfire. The V-1650-7 is 3D-printed as a kit in completely sustainable plant-based resin before being hand-painted and hand-assembled prior to mounting as a finished product.

Strictly limited to 225 produced units, these engines are built to order with a six-week lead time into the USA, eight weeks into Australasia. The first 50 orders that place a full deposit will received a free one-quarter scale Hamilton Standard P-51 propeller that has been modeled from a full-size unit flown in the UK. Each Merlin engine includes: P-51 exhaust stacks; modified P-51 engine mount desk stand; and a support booklet on the V-1650-7 engine development and the restoration of Spitfire AA810.

These engines are accurate to one-quarter scale, having been produced by 3D laser scanning individual components assembled as per the original engines. Dimensions include a length of 22.75-inches, height of 13.5-inches, and a width of 8.1-inches. The cost of this engine is $1500 and there is a payment plan. For more details, please go to *spitfireaa810.co.uk*.


AMERICAN EAGLES
Second Edition
A History of the United States Air Force
Featuring The National Museum of the United States Air Force
Dan Patterson, Clinton Terry
Based on Original Text by Air-Vice-Marshal Ron Dick, RAF

***American Eagles* offers a look at the history of the USAF through the aircraft on display in the National Museum of the USAF.**

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If you are looking for an impressive gift book on aviation, then *American Eagles: A History of the United States Air Force Featuring the Collection of the National Museum of the US Air Force* might be what you are looking for. Featuring the collection of airplanes, art, photographs, and memorabilia of the National Museum of the USAF, this magnificently illustrated book tells the story of the beginnings of flight through the creation of the USAF as a separate branch of the military, to the unbelievable technological achievements of what is the preeminent air power in the world today. Here are the combat aces, Medal of Honor recipients, daring generals, and average citizens who served in the Air Service, Air Corps, USAAF, and USAF. More than 250 color and 150 black and white illustrations and photos of the USAF of yesterday, today, and tomorrow. Published on the occasion of the 75th anniversary of the USAF and the 100th anniversary of the National Museum of the USAF. Published by Lyons Press at 336 pages and nearly four pounds, this makes an excellent gift book for a person interested in USAF aviation. Available through most bookstores.

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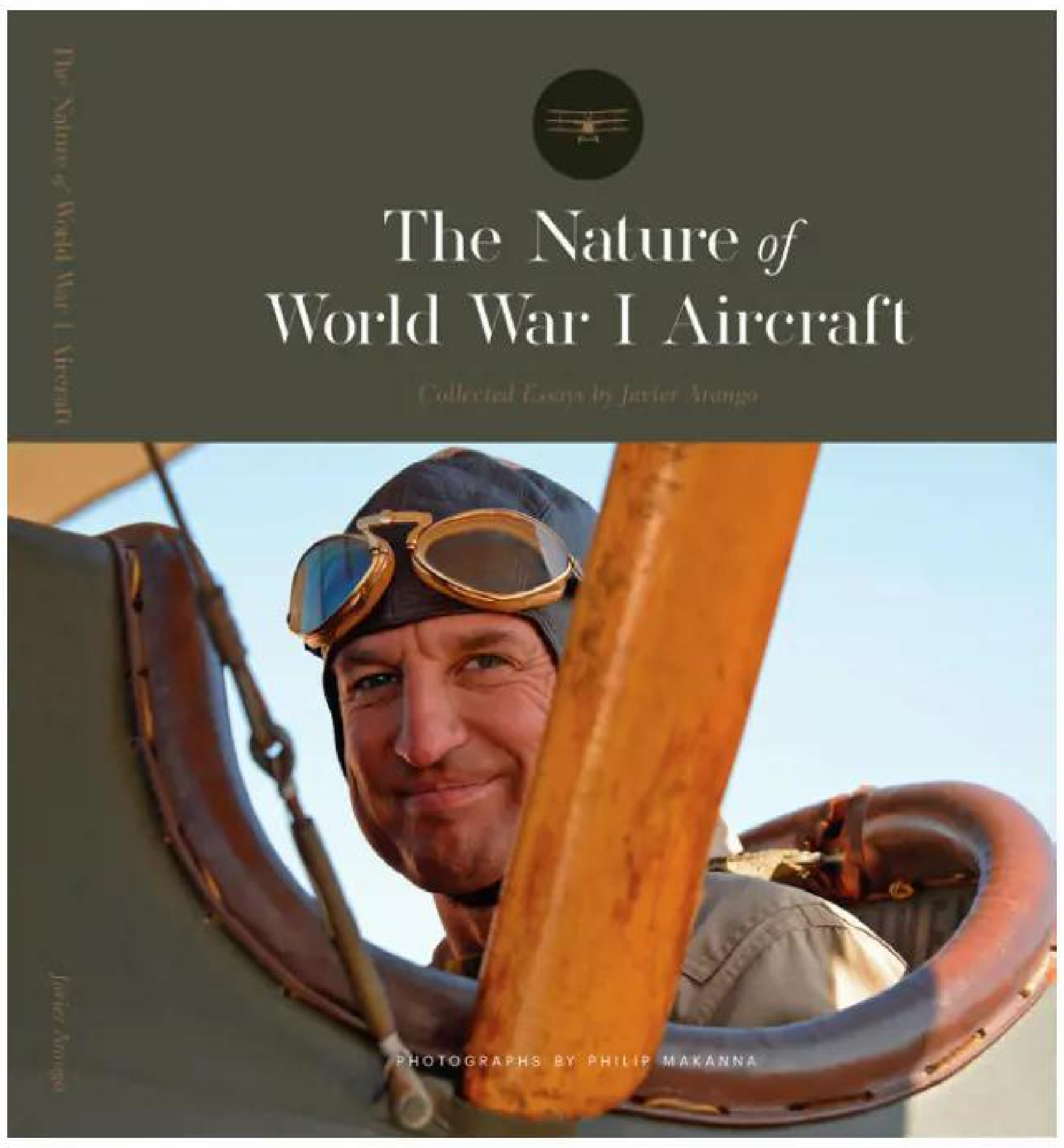
The P-51 Mustang hat will stand out at any airshow.

NEW FROM SPORTY'S AVIATION GIFTS

Sporty's Aviation Gifts always has exciting new products for the aviation enthusiast and the latest is a line of totes and hats with the P-51 Mustang as a motif. These items are made of the highest-quality materials and have been specially designed for Sporty's Aviation Gifts. The P-51 Mustang hat (SKU 5771) features details relating to the famous fighter and is just $24.95. The P-51 Mustang duffel bag will tote everything you need for an airshow. It measures 20-inches long, 10-inches high, and 9-inches wide. The tote is made exclusively for Sporty's Aviation Gifts and is in durable, water-resistant nylon. It has a spacious main compartment plus a shoe storage compartment. Two zippered end pockets and side pockets offer easy access to essentials. The duffel bag is decorated with items relating to the legendary fighter and is just $39.95 (SKU 5348). For more details, go to *aviationgifts.com*.

The distinctive P-51 duffel bag will carry all your airshow items.

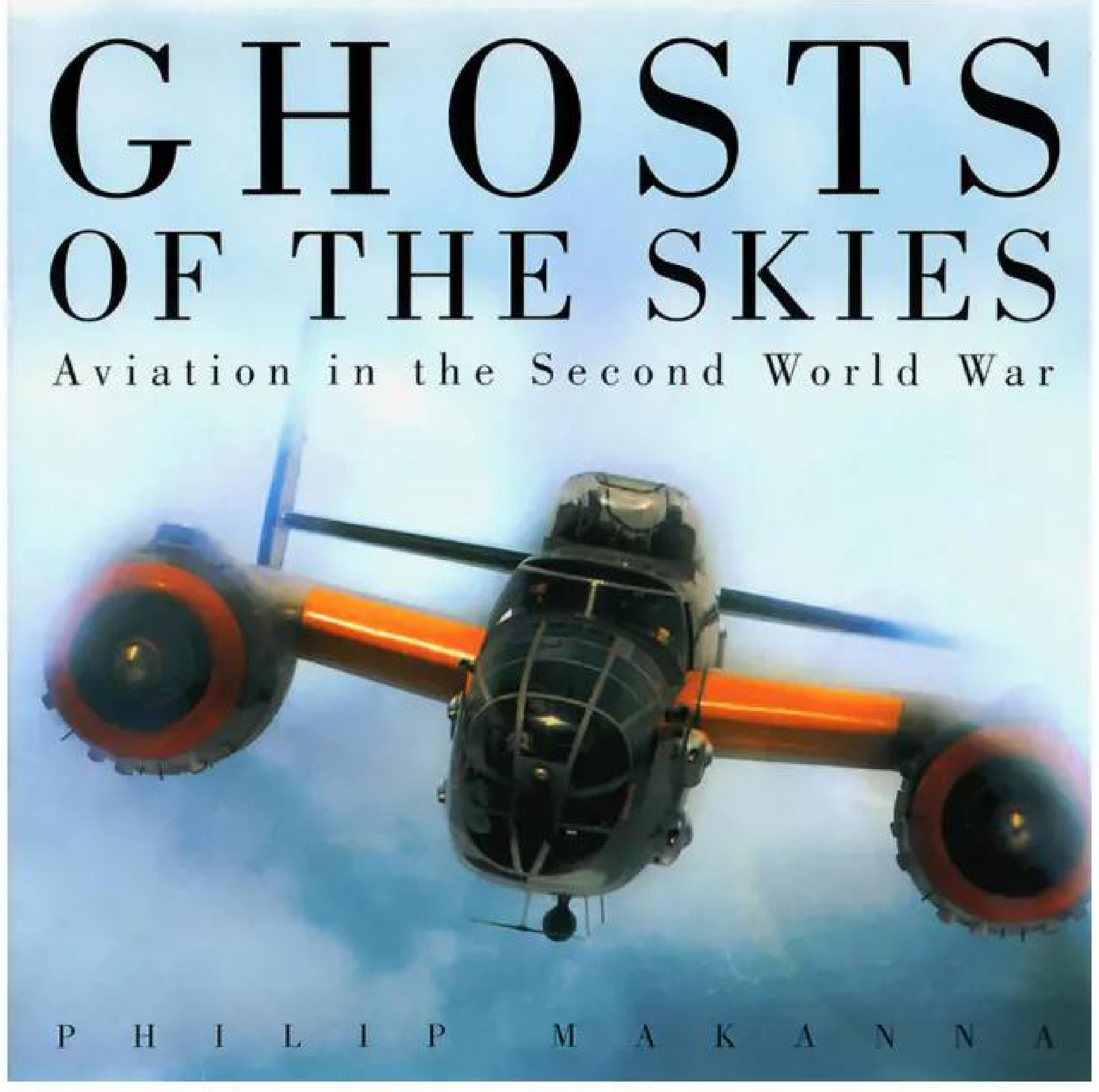

The Nature of World War I Aircraft
Collected Essays by Javier Arango
Photographs by Philip Makanna

The Nature of World War I Aircraft **by Javier Arrengo offers his thoughts on the history of the aircraft that he collected and flew.**

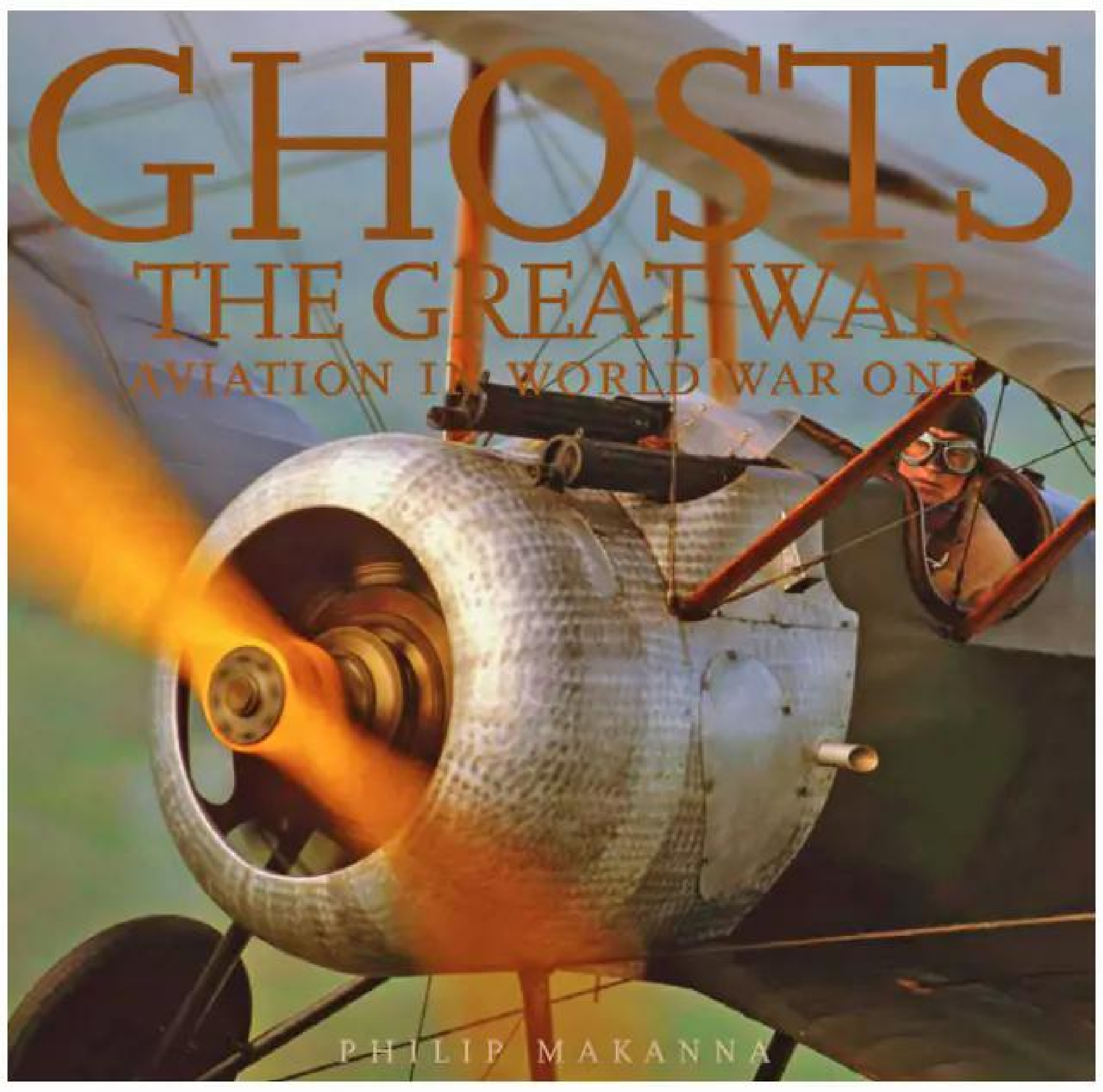
GET THE GHOST COLLECTION

Readers of *Air Classics* are familiar with the great calendars of WWI and WWII aircraft produced by Philip Makanna/GHOSTS and which can be ordered from the ad within this issue. However, GHOSTS has numerous other items that are of great interest to the aviation enthusiast and also make excellent gifts for the Christmas Season. *The Nature of World War I Aircraft* by Javier Arrengo is an ultra-high-quality book describing the joys of flying aircraft from the Great War. Javier, as a trained historian, believed that to understand history we must know not only what happened but also what people at the time thought was happening. Beautifully printed and illustrated, the volume gives Javier's thoughts on these history-making aircraft and their importance to the world. Just 1000 copies were printed and the price is $30.

Ghosts of the Great War is a deluxe hardbound book featuring Philip Makanna's stunning photos of WWI aircraft from the Aeroplane Collection. The book captures the magnificence of these early flying machines in the air and in glorious detail and is a must for anyone that enjoys aviation history. At 192 pages, the large-format book is packed with hundreds of illustrations and is $40.


GHOSTS OF THE SKIES
Aviation in the Second World War
PHILIP MAKANNA

Ghosts of the Skies **is a compilation of photographs taken over an eight-year period.**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AVIATION IN WORLD WAR ONE
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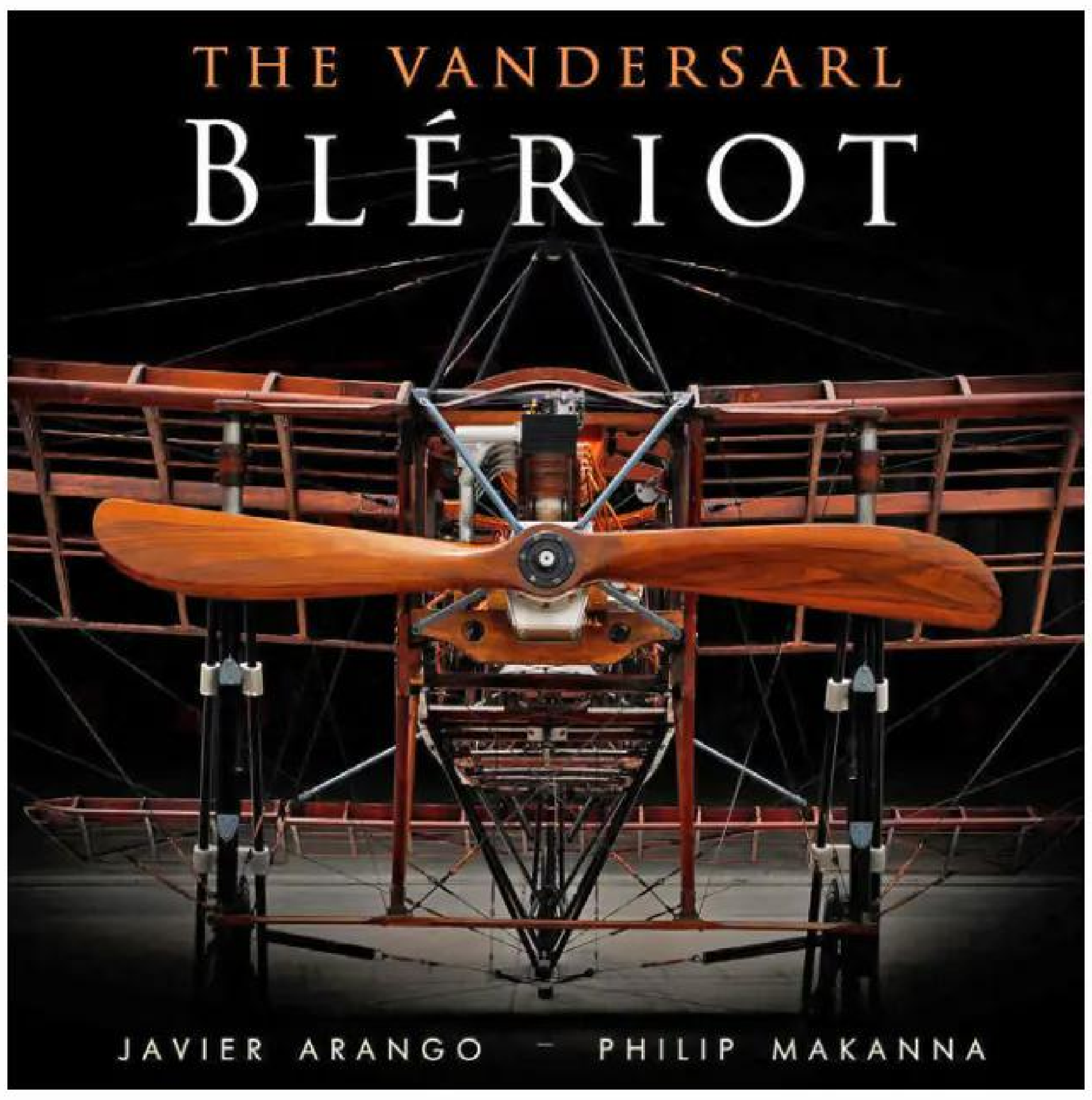
Ghosts of the Great War **is an oversize volume illustrating the WWI aircraft of the Aeroplane Collection.**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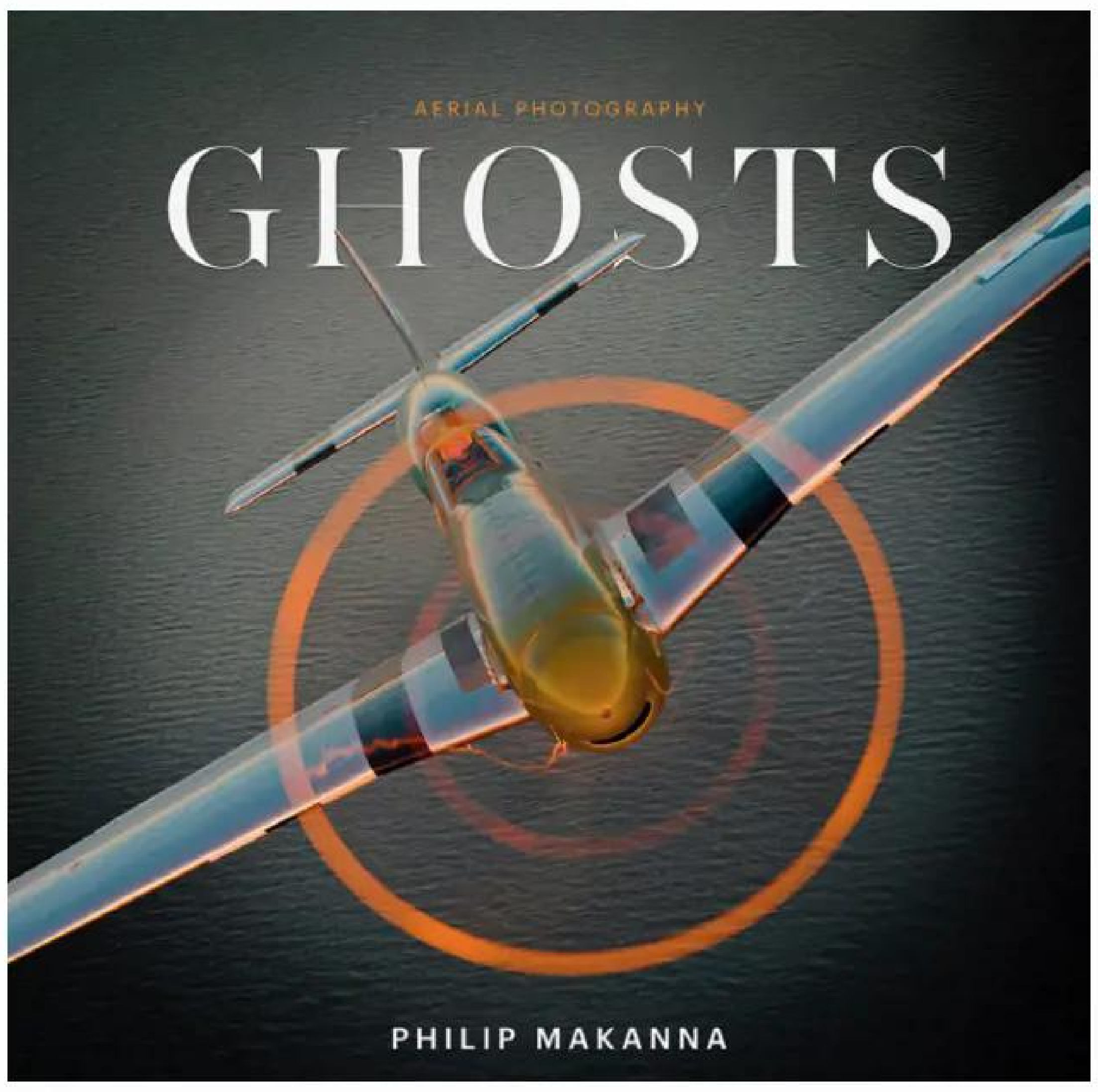
AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHY
GHOSTS
PHILIP MAKANNA

Ghosts — Aerial Photography **is a collection of the best of Makanna's photos from all time periods.**

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Ghosts of the Skies is a hardbound collection of the best of Philip Makanna's WWII aircraft photography taken overran eight-year period and shows a huge variety of Warbirds in their natural environment. This oversize hardbound volume is 180 pages and costs $40.

Ghosts — Aerial Photography is a compilation of Makanna's aviation photography from all time periods and it presents the best of the best in the highest-quality reproduction possible. Photos were taken around the world — the USA, Britain, New Zealand, and more. This oversize hardbound book was printed in just 1000 copies and costs $50.

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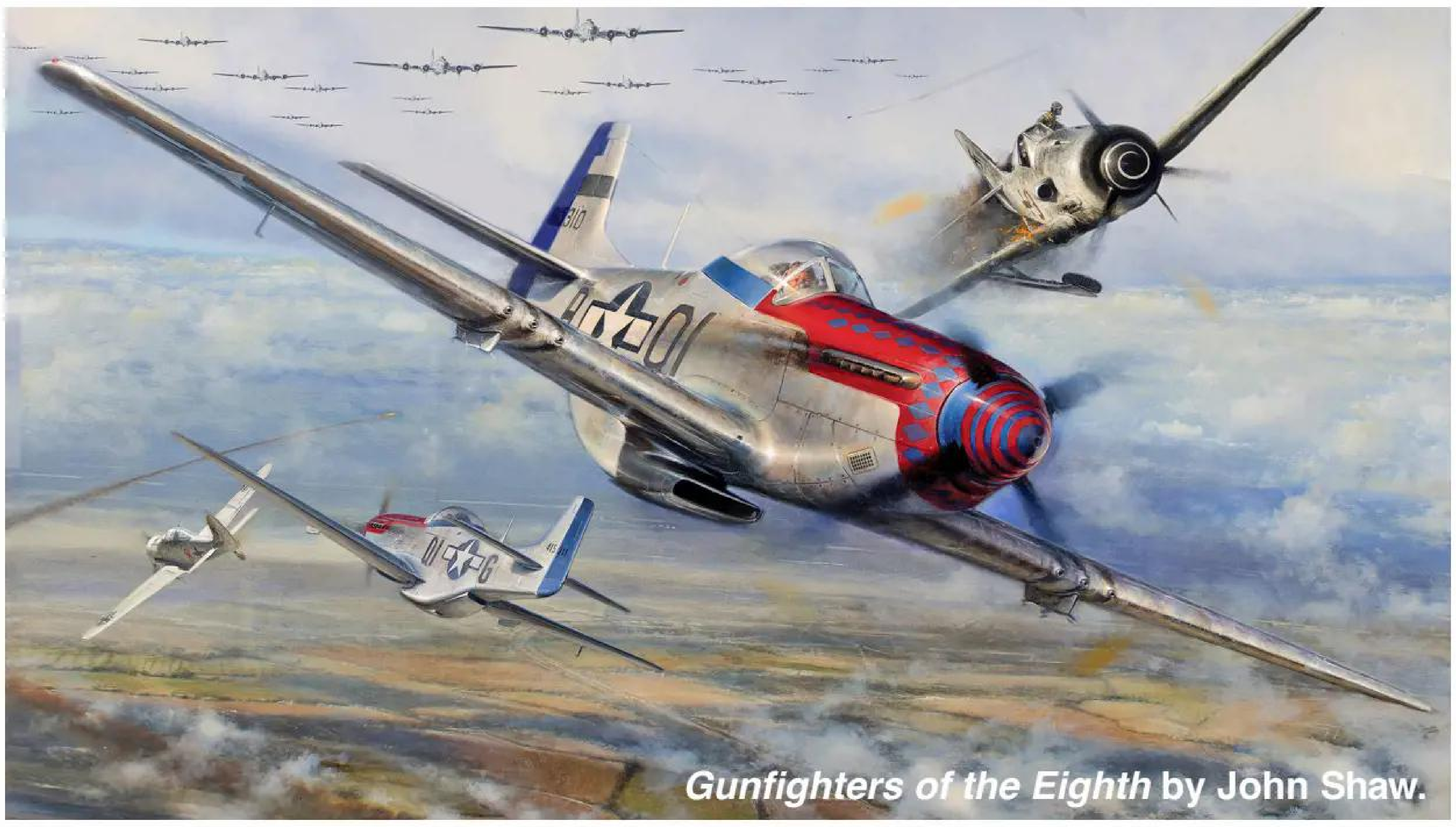
STOCKING STUFFERS FROM SUN AIR

The folks at Sun Air always have something new and unusual when it comes to vintage aircraft and engine parts (see the two-page ad on new Sun Air items elsewhere in this issue). One of the latest makes for a great stocking stuffer — a factory data plate for a Pratt & Whitney R-2800 engine — the most famous radial engine of the Second World War. The R-2800 powered the Hellcat, Tigercat, Bearcat, Invader, Thunderbolt and many other victorious American aircraft. Each R-2800 factory data plate is just $15 (including postage and handling). To get your plate, call Sun Air 661-257-7708 and ask for a "P&W R-2800 data plate."

Sun Air's R-2800 data plate.

HOW ABOUT A FINE ART PRINT?

Aces High Gallery in Ojai, California, is offering a new limited edition art print by well-known artist John Shaw titled *Gunfighters of the Eighth*. During the raging air battles of January 1945, the Mustangs of the 8th Air Force tackled the *Luftwaffe* and the main image of the print is a *schwarm* of Fw 190s fighting with the P-51Ds of the 345th Fighter Group and the Mustang flown by Clinton Burdick has just downed his second Fw 190 of the day. Before the artwork for this edition was completed, the fine art paper on which it would be printed was signed by aces Burdick, Clyde East, Bob Goebel, and Steve Pisanos. Sadly, all have passed and that makes this art work even more prized. Please see the ad in this issue (prices start at $175) or contact Aces High Gallery at 800-528-0887 or *www.aceshighgallery*. **AC**


Gunfighters of the Eighth by John Shaw.

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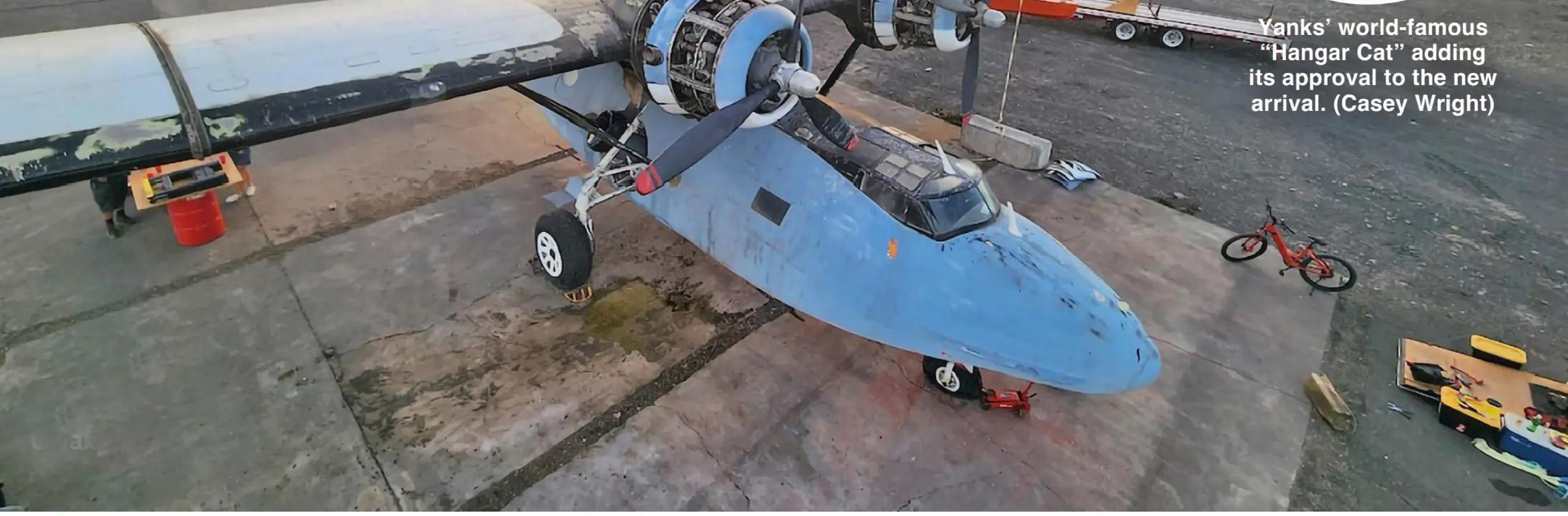
YANKS SAVES A CAT

HOW YANKS AIR MUSEUM LAUNCHED A RESCUE MISSION TO SAVE A RARE PBY-5A CATALINA BEFORE THE AIRCRAFT WAS SCRAPPED

BY MICHAEL O'LEARY

SEND MORE CATS!

Yanks' world-famous "Hangar Cat" adding its approval to the new arrival. (Casey Wright)

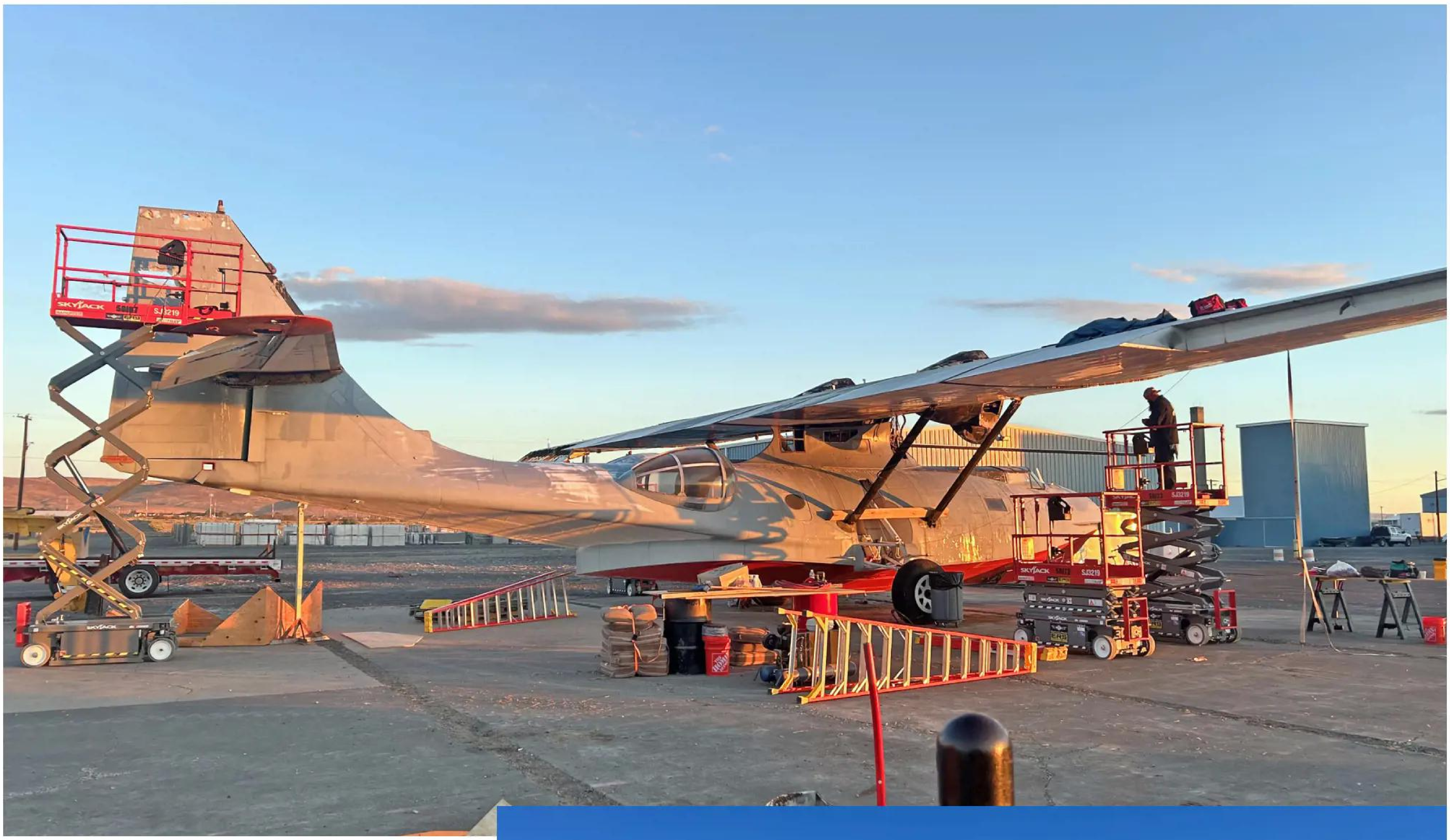


The Super Cat dominates the Ephrata Airport ramp as the disassembly process begins. (Milo DeGrassi)

I know it seems like it happened overnight, but it didn't. The world population of Consolidated PBY Catalinas (especially flying examples) has drastically dwindled over the last couple of decades. Most of us can remember seeing Catalinas at airshows or fire-fighting in the USA and Canada. All that has changed. When is the last time you saw a flying Cat? Think about it. Few aircraft are more magnificent in flight than the Catalina and I started thinking about the last time that I saw a Cat in flight. I honestly can't remember but it was probably on a photo flight since, over the years, I have had to good fortune to fly with a number of examples. I will go through photos and try to find that occasion but I have been lucky enough to fly with air yacht conversions, fire-bombers, Warbirds, and survey aircraft. Now, I just wished I had pressed harder to do more aerial missions with the type!

The genesis of this article started some time ago when I learned that a Catalina parked on the ramp at Ephrata, Washington, stood the threat of possibly being scrapped. This was after the example that was at Buckeye, Arizona, was damaged in a windstorm. And I mean exactly that — damaged. It could have been repaired but the powers to be had that beautiful survivor ripped apart to the point where useful components could not be salvaged. That should not have happened in today's Warbird world.

Talking to the airport manager, I learned that the owner of the Ephrata PBY-5A had basically abandoned the Catalina after not having paid tie-down fees for some time. Some people wanted it gone since it "junked up the airport" but the Cat also had

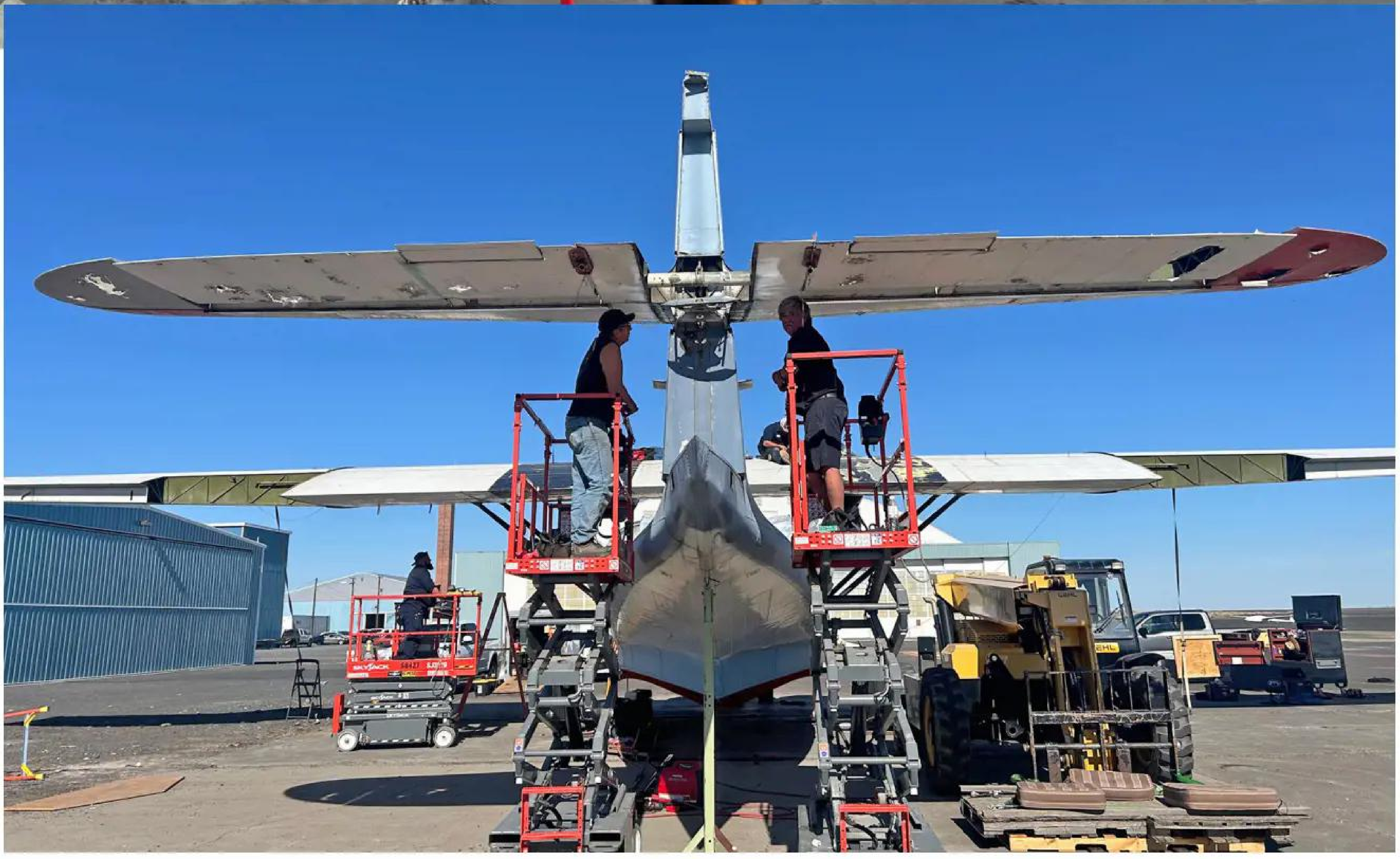


Wright R-2600 engines off, work begins on removing the wing from the pylon — no easy task. (Milo DeGrassi)

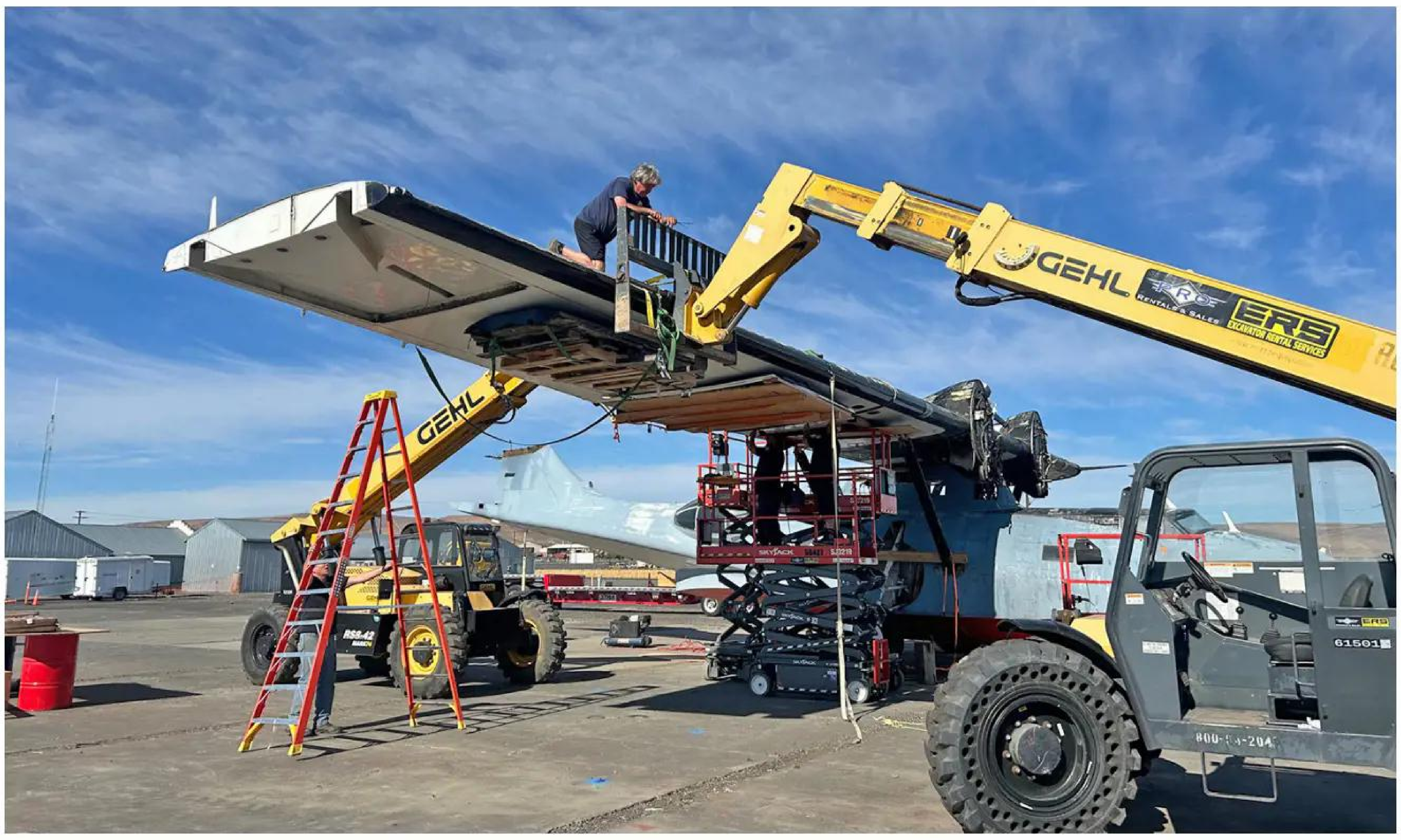
a strong group of local supporters who seemed to love the fact that the machine was parked at their airport. I knew Charles Nichols was interested in Catalinas and already had one in storage. That machine was suffering some corrosion issues so Charles was looking for either replacement parts or a replacement airframe.

The Ephrata Cat was built for the US Navy as PBY-5A BuNo 34027 with the standard Pratt & Whitney R-1830 engines and went into service with a number of USN units. It was eventually transferred to the US Coast Guard but by 1955 the day of the Cat was drawing to a close. By November of that year, a ferry crew was turning final, dropping the gear, and bringing the plane in for a landing at Naval Air Facility Litchfield Park. Once on the ground, it was defueled and then moved to a parking slot to join dozens of Cats and other USN Navy aircraft of the same time period including Privateers, Texans, Savages, and more.

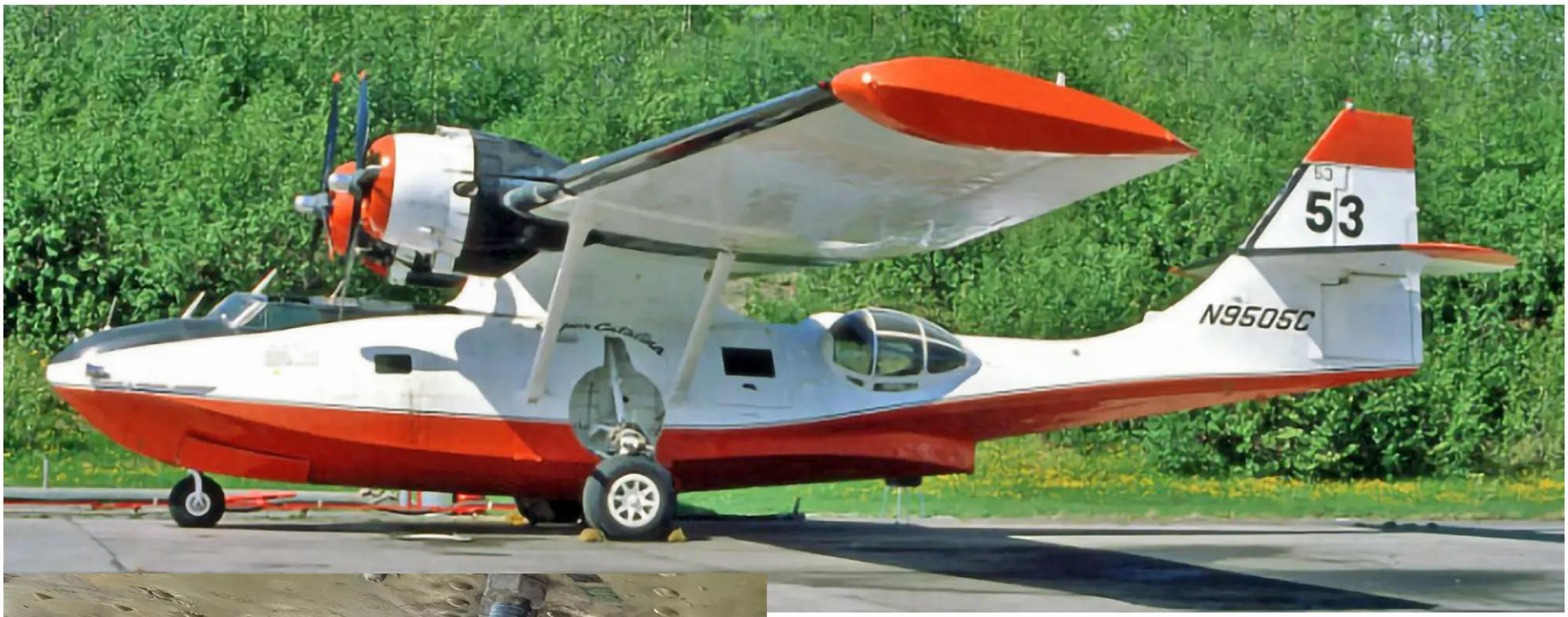
There was a distinct civilian market for Catalinas and many examples were snapped up in the various auctions held by the government. Catalina 34027 found a buyer during August 1956 and received the civil registration



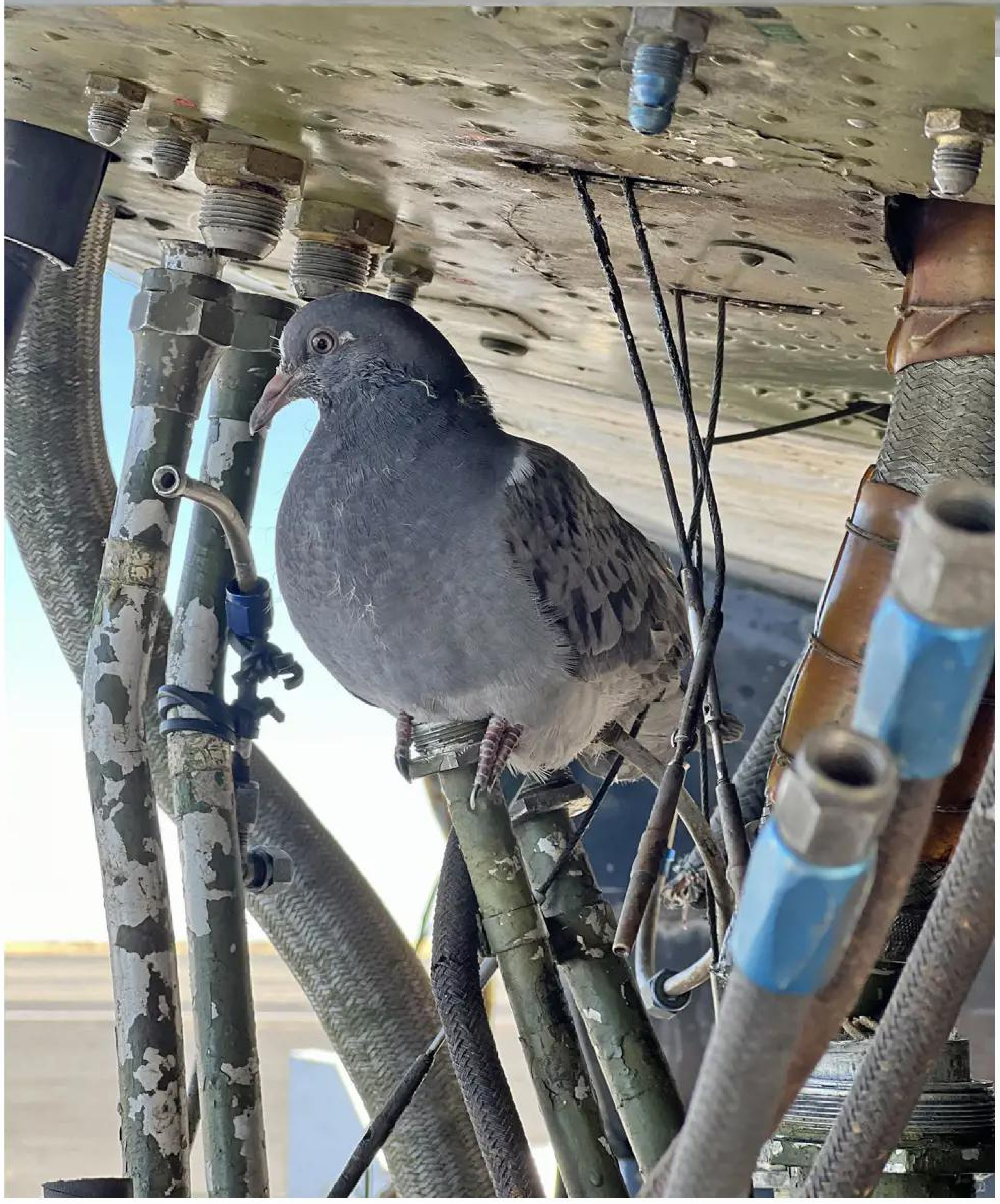
Removing the elevator and the Steward-Davis Super Cat rudder. (Milo DeGrassi)



Easy does it — with the retractable floats and leading edges removed, the difficult task of lifting the wing off the pylon is underway. (Milo DeGrassi)



N9505C during its working days as Tanker 53.

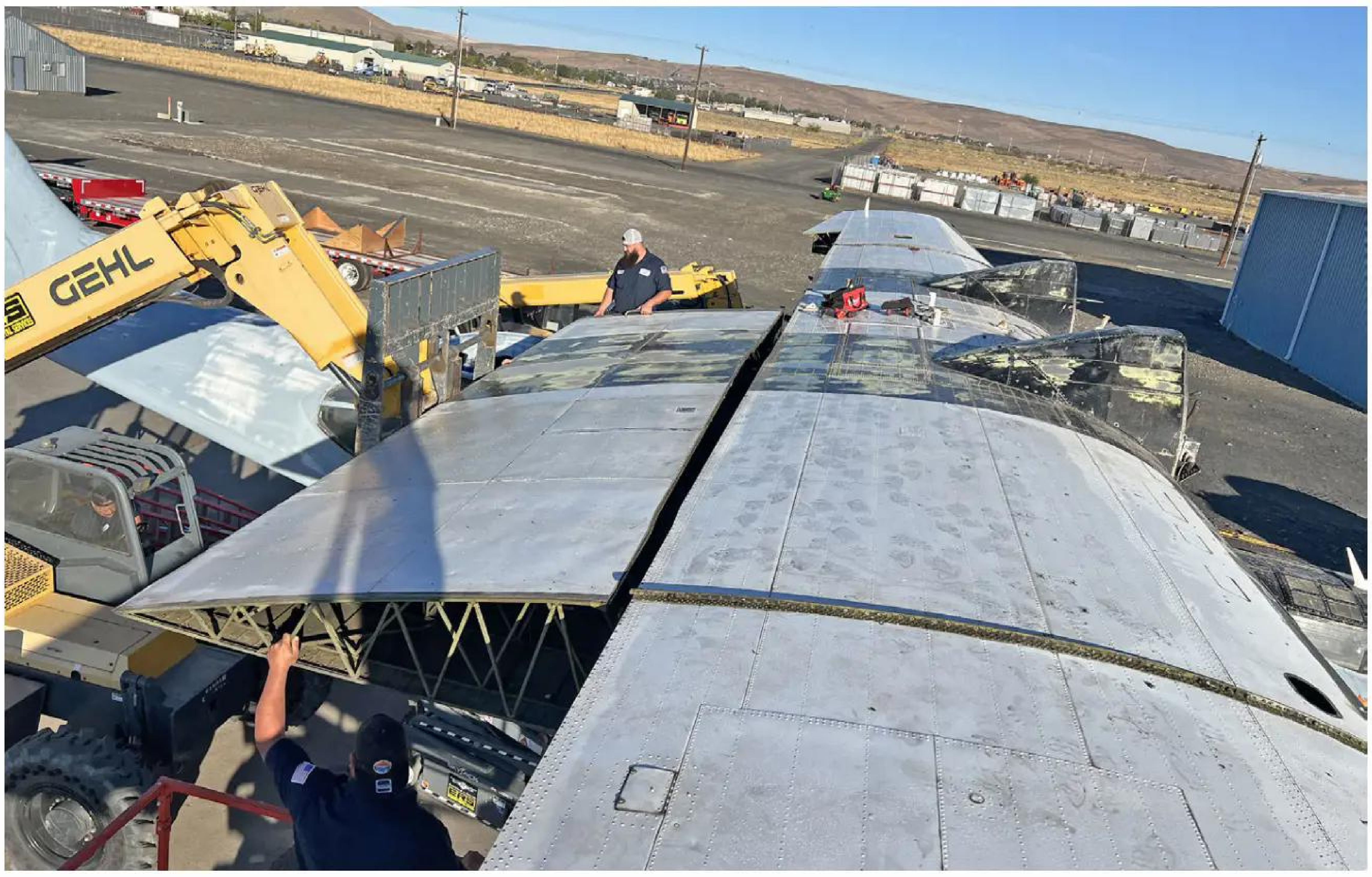


One of the Ephrata residents that found a home in the Super Cat. (Milo DeGrassi)

N9505C. This was not going to be a pampered Warbird — that concept was still several decades in the future — and the plane was pulled into an area reserved for civilian purchases. It was then made ready for the short ferry flight to Phoenix's Sky Harbor Airport where a number of businesses existed that catered to working on ex-military aircraft sold at NAF Litchfield Park and the USAF's Davis-Monthan AFB.

It did not take long for the plane to be modified into a new role as an aerial fire-fighter. Well into that hazardous career, the owners decided to fly N9505C to Long Beach Airport in southern California and to the Steward-Davis Aircraft facility where it would be converted to "Super Cat" configuration. For a working PBY, the Super Cat was a very logical answer to a number of problems. A PBY scooping water could always use more power and the addition of NAA B-25J QECs was a near-perfect solution. With a relatively minimal amount of work, the Wright R-2600s could be mated to the wing while other clean-up work including the replacement of the bow turret with a clipper bow was also undertaken and this made for safer water operations. Externally, the addition of a larger, squared-off rudder made spotting a Super Cat relatively easy.

By 1969, N9505C joined the fleet of other fire-fighting Catalinas operated by Robert Schlaefli under the corporate name of SLAFCO with the main headquarters being at the remote and sprawling Moses Lake Airport in Washington. From that location, the Cats would be sent out on contracts to a wide variety of locations. By the start of the 1990s, the writing was on the wall for the amphibious fire-fighters. Accidents had thinned the fleet, maintenance was somewhat minimal, and the airframes were simply



Detaching the center aft portion of the Super Cat's massive wing. (Milo DeGrassi)

becoming tired. By 1999, the company decided to cease Catalina operations.

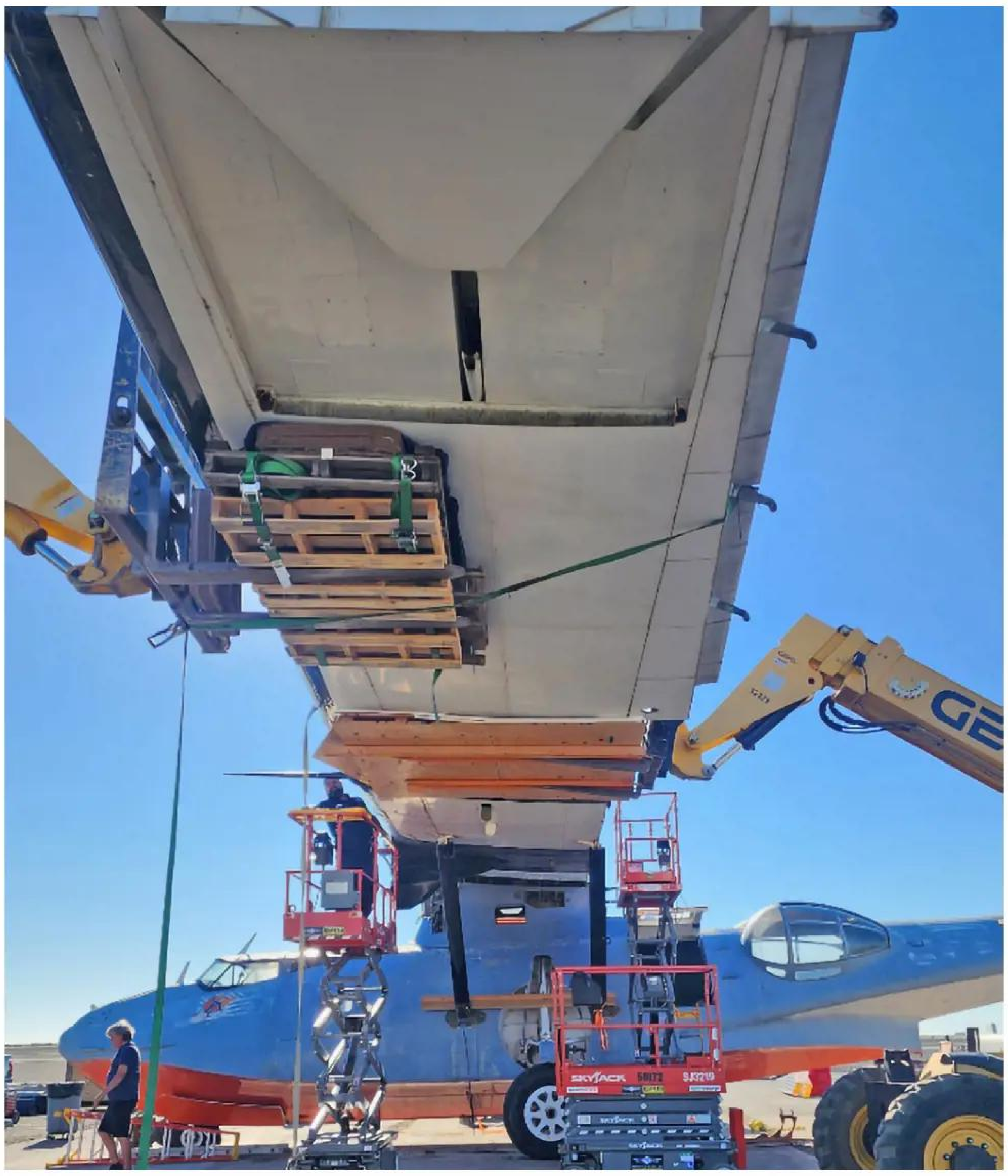
Before that date, the Cats, along with a wide variety of other vintage fire-bombers, would enjoy a brief burst of fame on the silver screen. Steven Spielberg decided he wanted to remake the 1943 WWII romantic drama *A Guy Named Joe* but in Spielberg's 1989 film, which would be titled *Always*, the WWII aviators were replaced by fire-bomber pilots. Richard Dreyfuss would star as the world's least-likely fire-bomber pilot and the movie, which received mixed reviews, had a highlight opening scene in where N9505C came in for a scooping run and blasted two fishermen out of their boat but even those dramatic flying sequences were not enough for famed critic Roger Ebert who called *Always*, "Spielberg's weakest film since *1941*." As a point of interest, some of the filming was done at Ephrata.

The famous scene from the film *Always* where Tanker 53 is just about ready to disrupt the lives of two fishermen.

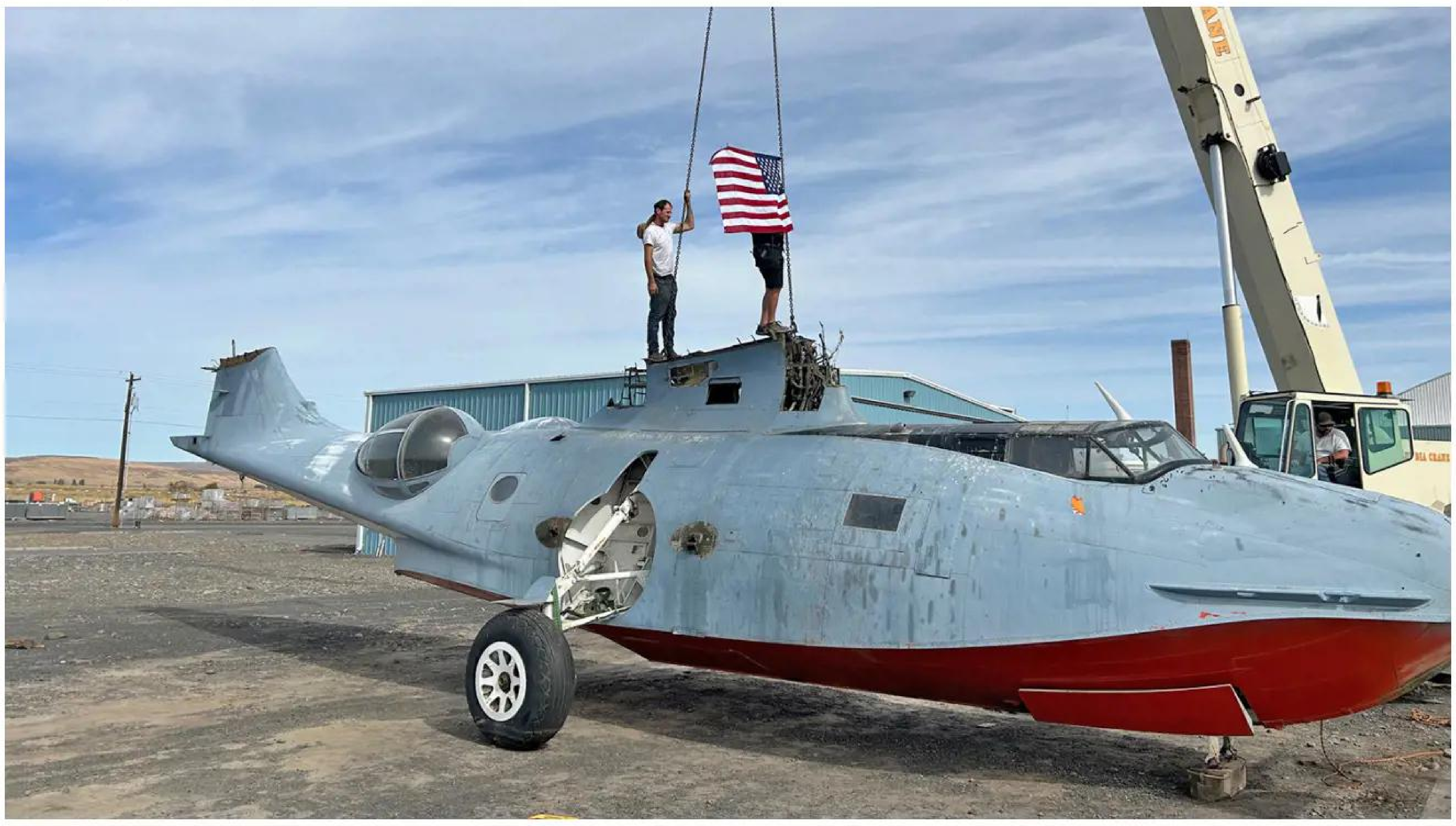
With the winding down of the operation, Schlaefli decided to have a massive auction to liquidate all airframes (including an ultra-rate Douglas B-23 Dragon), engines, and parts. Aero Trader's Carl Scholl and I decided to attend the auction since Carl was interested in the B-25 QECs and some airframe parts. The auction was relatively well-organized and run by a reputable company but part way into the first day, Schlaefli became very agitated, stood up waving some papers, and yelled that the auction was over. Well, that's not the way you do it and the auction company was taken aback. Apparently, Bob thought his items were worth more — a lot more — than what was being bid and he apparently felt some of the bidders were conspiring to set low prices. By this point, Carl had bought several engines and in the ensuing chaos following the shutdown, we jumped in a truck and headed to Ephrata where the engines were stored so that Carl could claim his purchases before Schlaefli backed down even further.

After the engines were loaded, I went back to Moses Lake and wondered around the ramp that was now devoid of spectators and bidders. It was very late in the day and except for one PBY and the B-23 in a hangar, the other Cats were arrayed on the ramp and the wind was flowing through the airframes making for a sort of spooky whistling sound. I decided to get inside as many of the aircraft as possible and the condition of the airframes varied widely — ranging from turn-key to restoration projects.

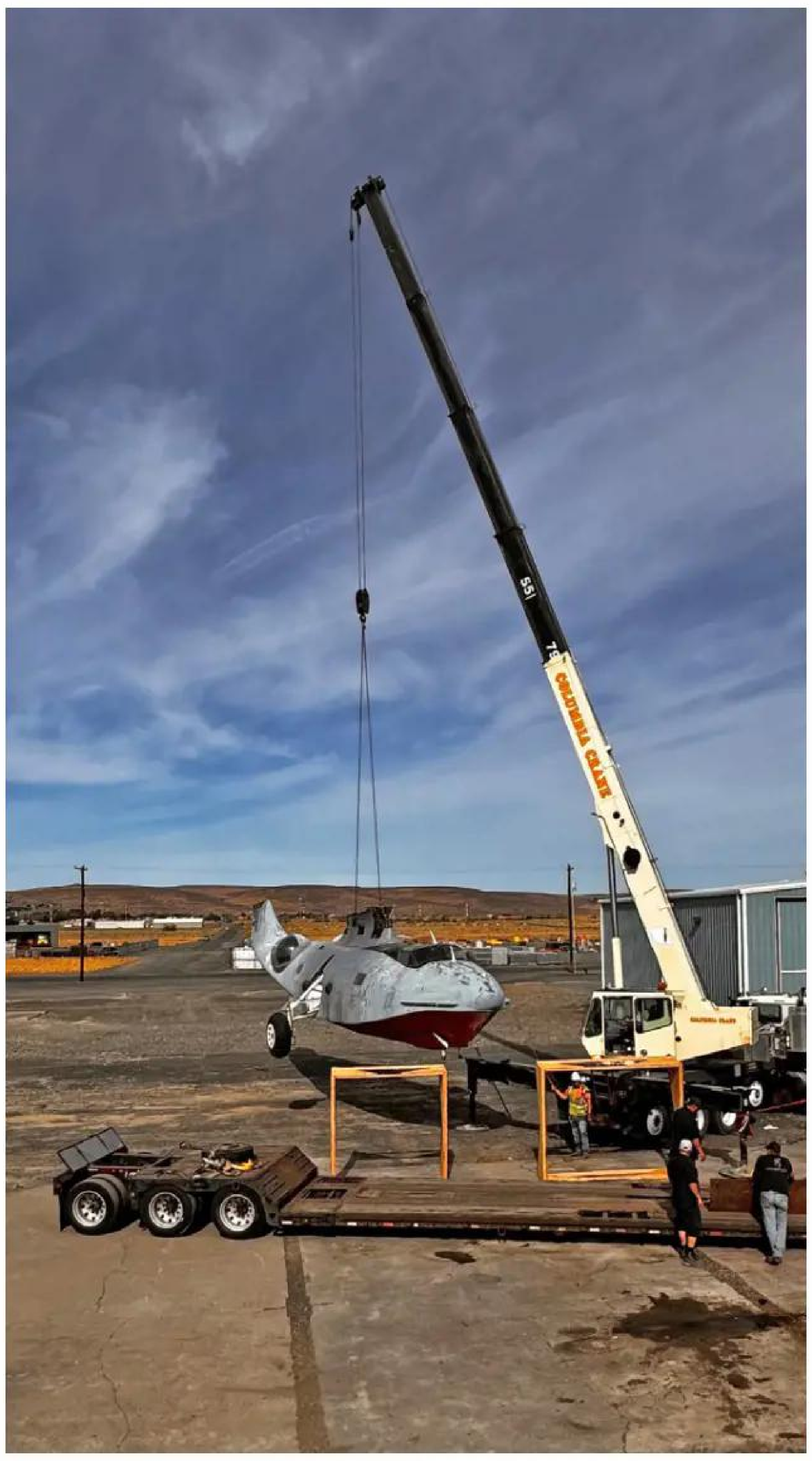
I always liked the Super Cat conversions so I spent some time in N9505C (which had flown as Tanker 9 and Tanker 53 during its long career).

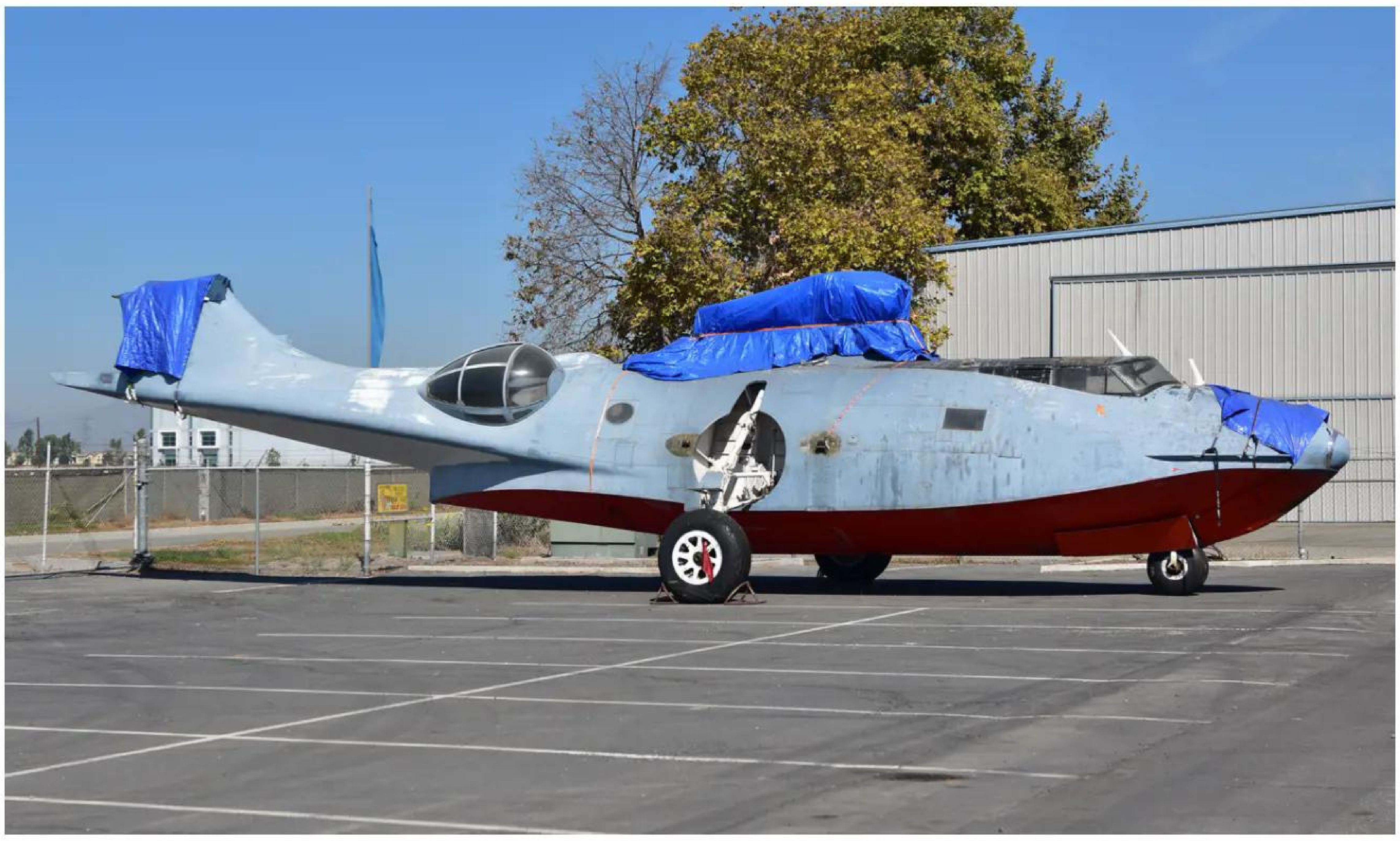


This view shows all the bracing that was required for wing removal. (Milo DeGrassi)



Stripped of everything that could be removed, the fuselage/hull is prepared to raise onto the truck. (Milo DeGrassi)


With air under its tires for the first time in many years, the Super Cat is lifted toward the trailer. (Milo DeGrassi)


N9505C on the ramp at Yanks Air Museum. (M. O'Leary)

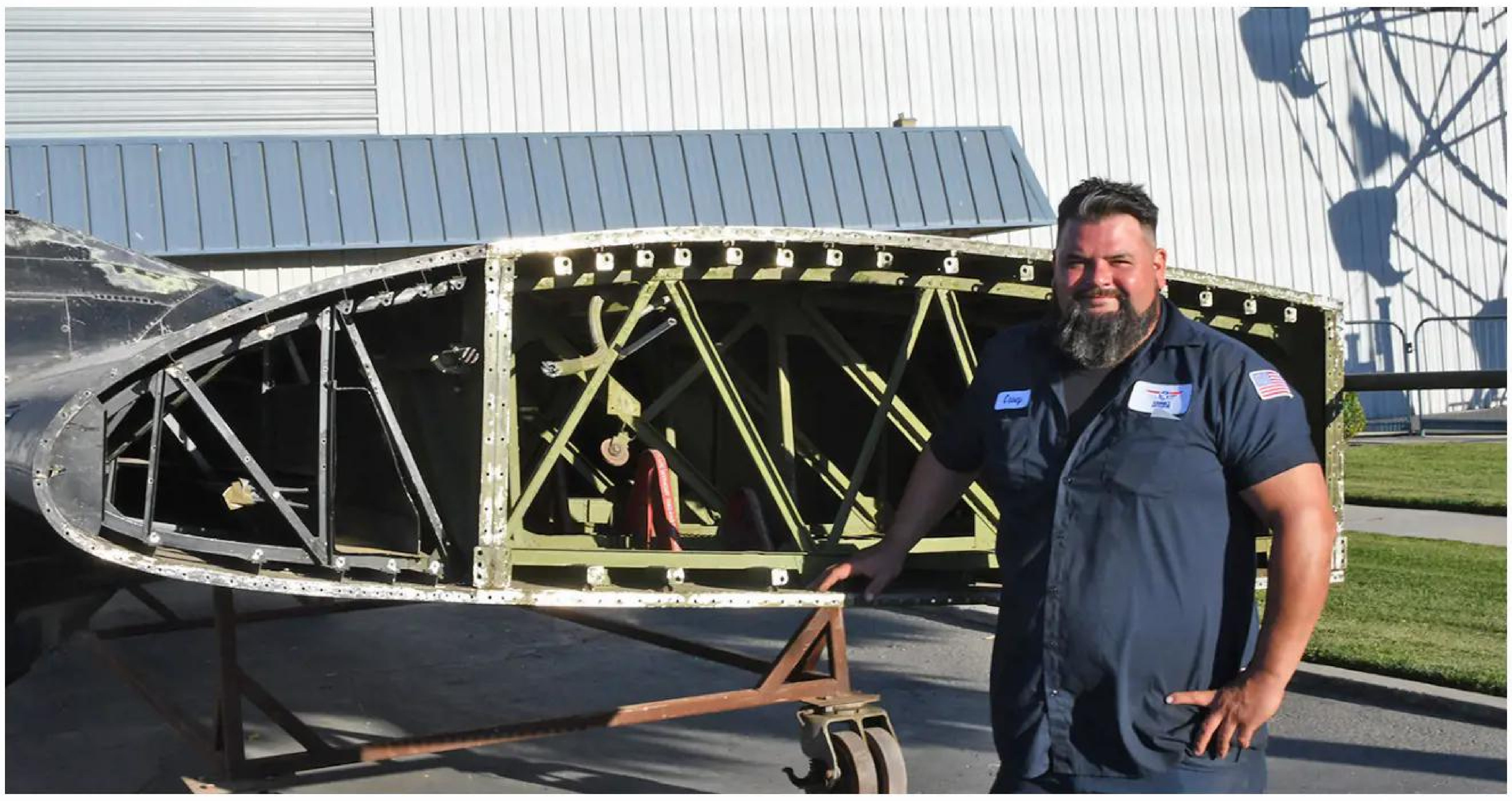
Although the areas prone to corrosion were almost impossible to inspect, the airframe looked pretty good but showed evidence of being hard-worked. The aircraft had sold for $165,000. Toward the end of his life, Schlaefli told his stepson to sell everything, no matter the price and this seemed to clean out the rest of the aircraft and the mountains of parts and engines.

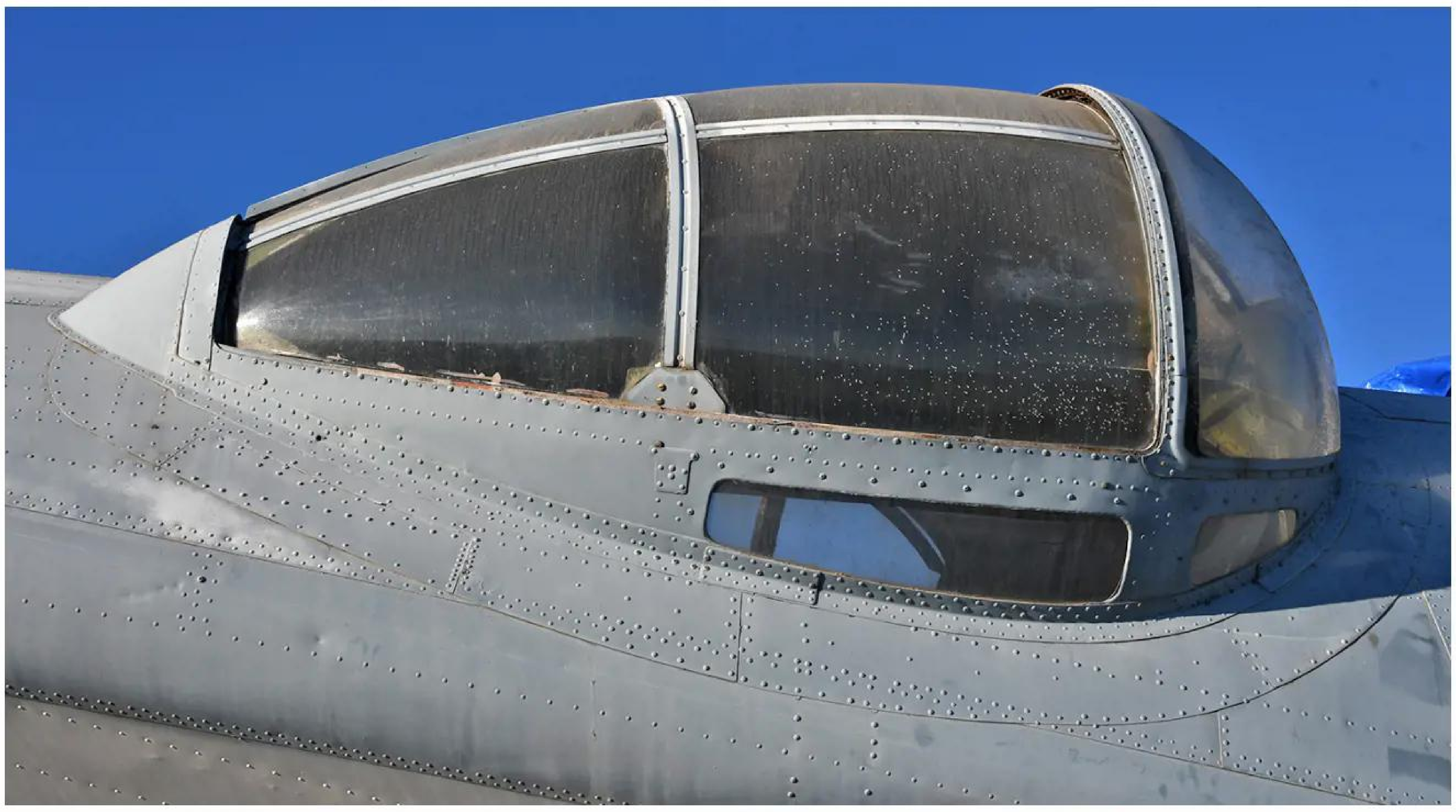
N9505C, which was one of best-looking Cats in the auction, was put into flying condition and taken to nearby Ephrata where it received a very curious paint scheme. The owner of the craft announced all sorts of great plans for the Super Cat but none came to fruition. Fortunately, Ephrata is remote enough to where the airframe was not vandalized but it began suffering from exposure to the weather. Little was done to seal any of the airframe openings and the massive amounts of fabric covering began to sag, tear, and peel off from the structure.

It seems ownership changed several times with no evidence of any work being done. As with most of the other Catalinas sold at the auction, the PBYs were way past the means of the new owners. After discussing the situation of the Super Cat with Charles Nichols, Frank Wright headed to Ephrata and placed the winning bid for the aircraft. "There appeared to be only one other bidder," Frank would recall, "and they did not seem all that interested."

Plans were discussed on the best way of getting the plane to Chino. Should a crew spend several months working on the craft to get it in ferry condition or should the plane be disassembled and trucked back to the museum? The control surfaces from Yanks' other Catalina were pulled from storage and recovered in case the flying option was selected.

Then came the unspeakable tragedy — Frank Wright and Michael Gilles were killed on 15 June when the museum's Lockheed C-40 (Model


Casey Wright with the wing center section — probably the most critical part of any Catalina restoration. "Fortunately, this unit is relatively corrosion-free," said Casey. (M. O'Leary)


The fuselage/hull blisters are now extremely rare items. (M. O'Leary)

Visit YANKS

The Super Cat prepares to move into the storage hangar. (M. O'Leary)

12) crashed on takeoff. The accident stunned the museum and devasted the close-knit families of the pilots. Of course, everything, including the PBY move, was put on hold.

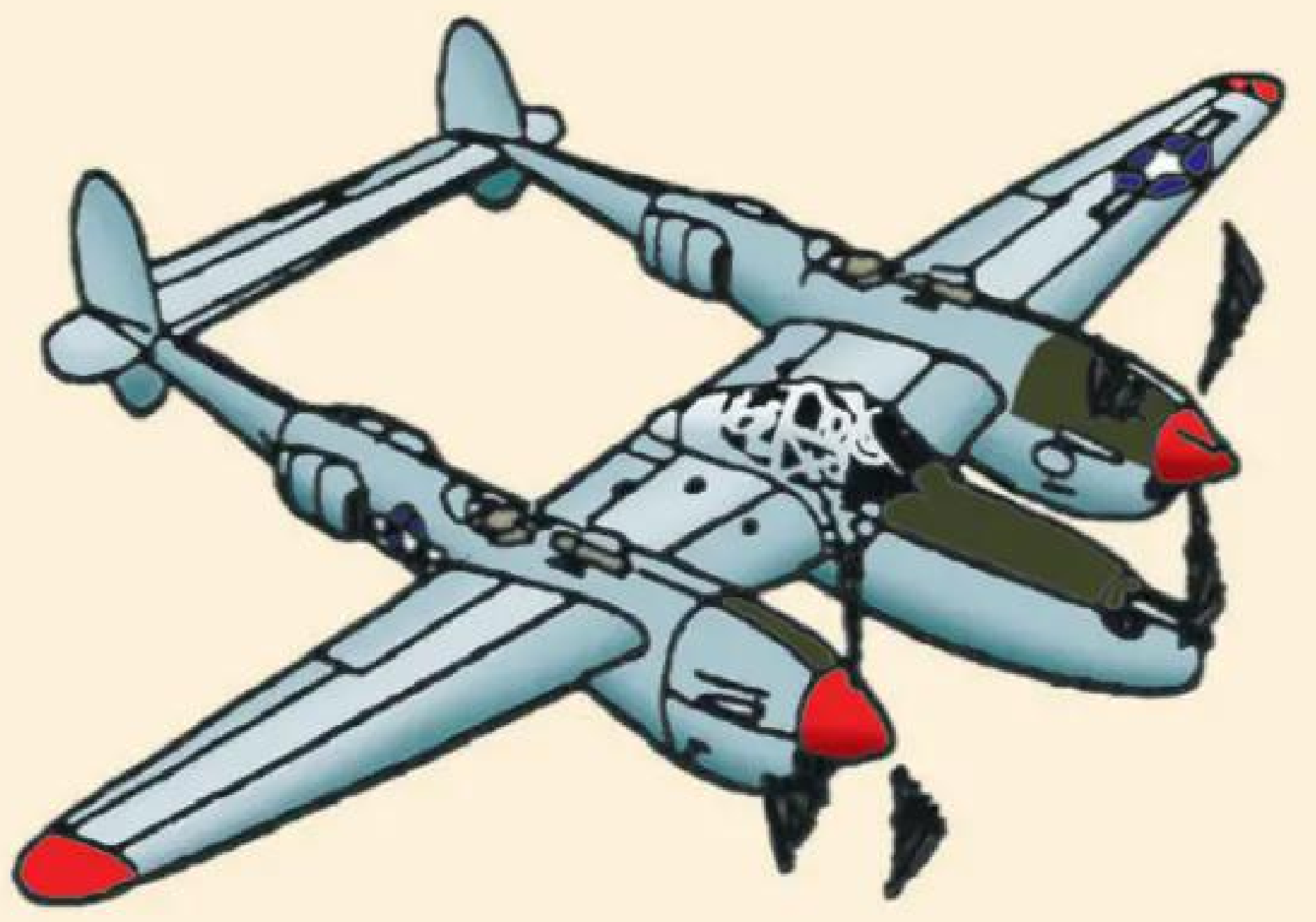
As time passed and the Museum regrouped while Casey Wright stepped forward to take charge of the Super Cat recovery. The decision was made to disassemble and truck the plane to Chino. "We decided to head north and hit the Super Cat hard," said Casey. "I put together a skilled crew that I knew could get the job done professionally and in the shortest amount of time. Ryan Douthitt [Yanks IA and A&P], David Valenzuela [Yanks], George Barragan [Nichols Lumber trucker], Mark Smith [Pacific Aircraft Services], Milo De Grassi [A&P], and myself formed the team.

"My dad said that he took the first Yanks PBY apart in five days with three guys. I think he might have been embellishing a bit! It took us four days to deconstruct the Super Cat and another two days to get it loaded up.

"Outside of the pylon bolts being bastards to remove, the part of the trip that really bothered me was discovering just how attached the local community had become to the Super Cat. They showed up on site to let us know how they felt. Some were in tears, some were swearing, but most were grateful that they wouldn't have to watch the decomposition any longer. One woman was concerned with the bird habitat in the aircraft. By not closing off any of the access points, the local bird population had established dozens of nests in the plane. She wanted to know if we were going to transplant their nests. For the most part, their sadness made me sad. However, I believe we comforted them by explaining the Super Cat was going to a great new home and that they could visit the plane anytime they desired.

"Then, we set off for our road trip back home. It was a great trip and my mom really paved the way with the Highway Patrol and the other organizations required for this type of journey. Of course, lots of people wanted to know what we were hauling and where it was going. We arrived at Chino, lifted the components off the trailers, and placed many into our large storage hangar where they are keeping company with our other Catalina. For the moment, the fuselage/hull is sitting outside and all visitors to Yanks are invited to do a close inspection."

We will be featuring updates on the restoration of the Super Cat in upcoming issues. Also, Yanks is very interested in acquiring military equipment for the interior of the PBY-5A. **AC**



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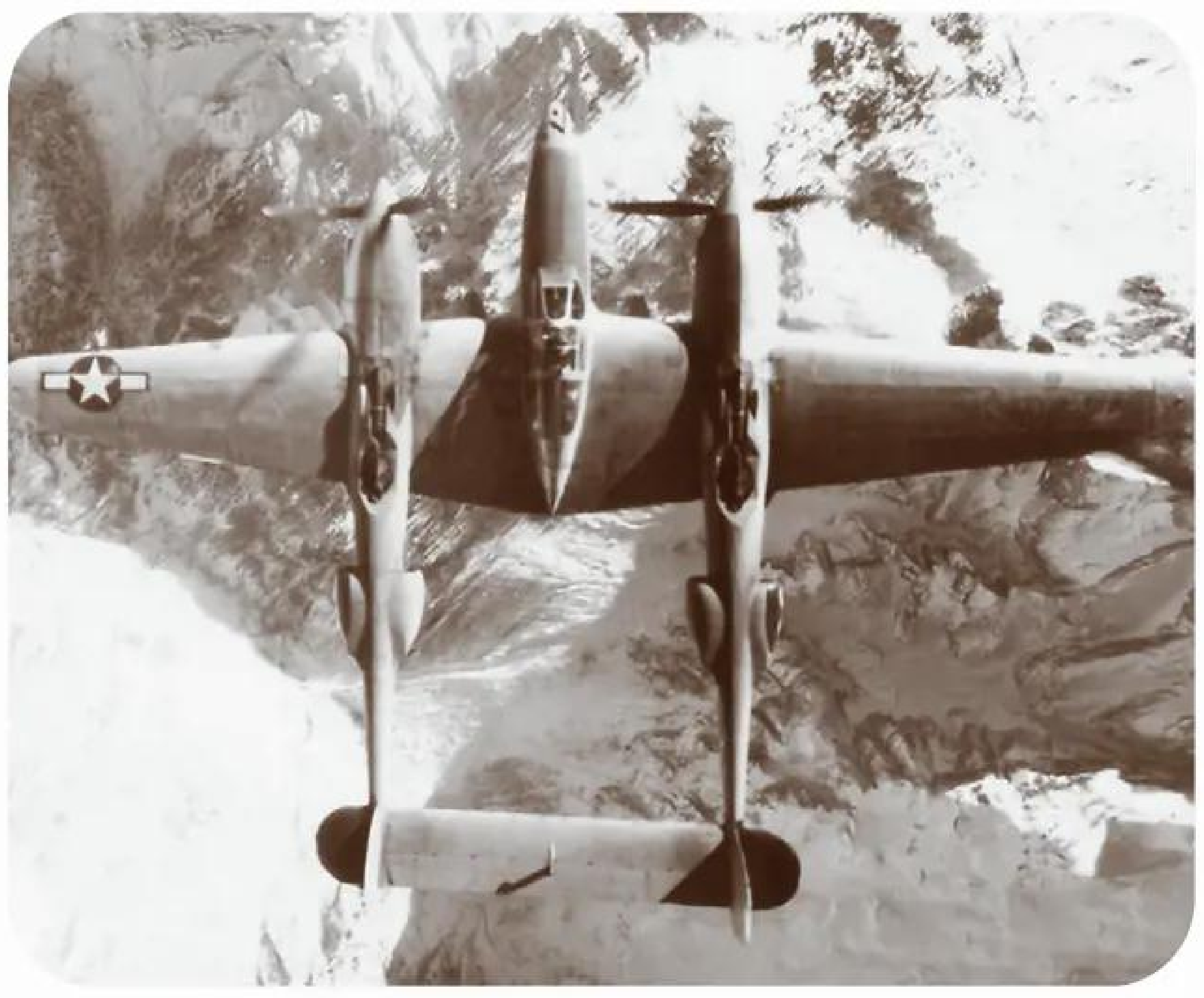

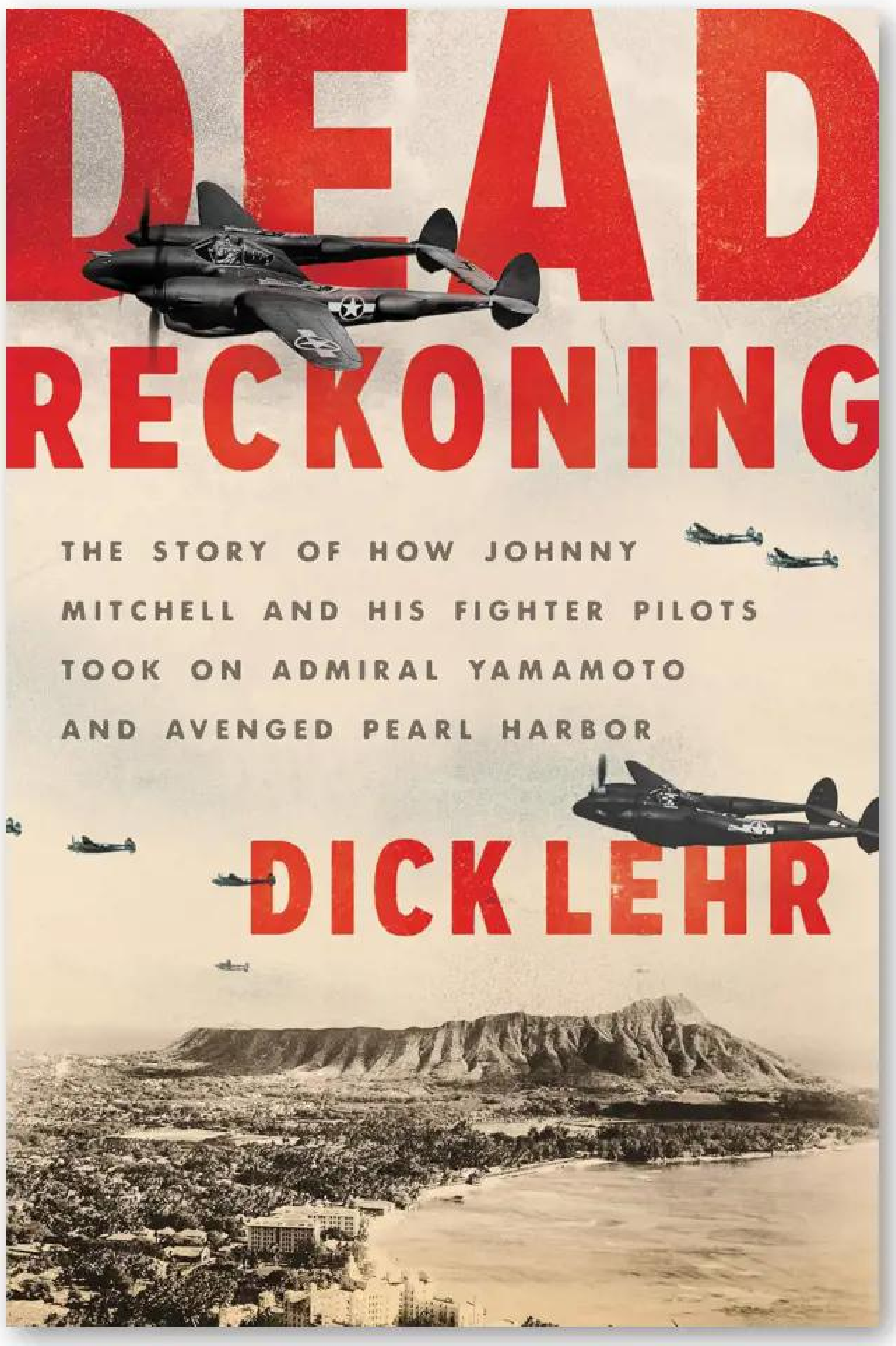
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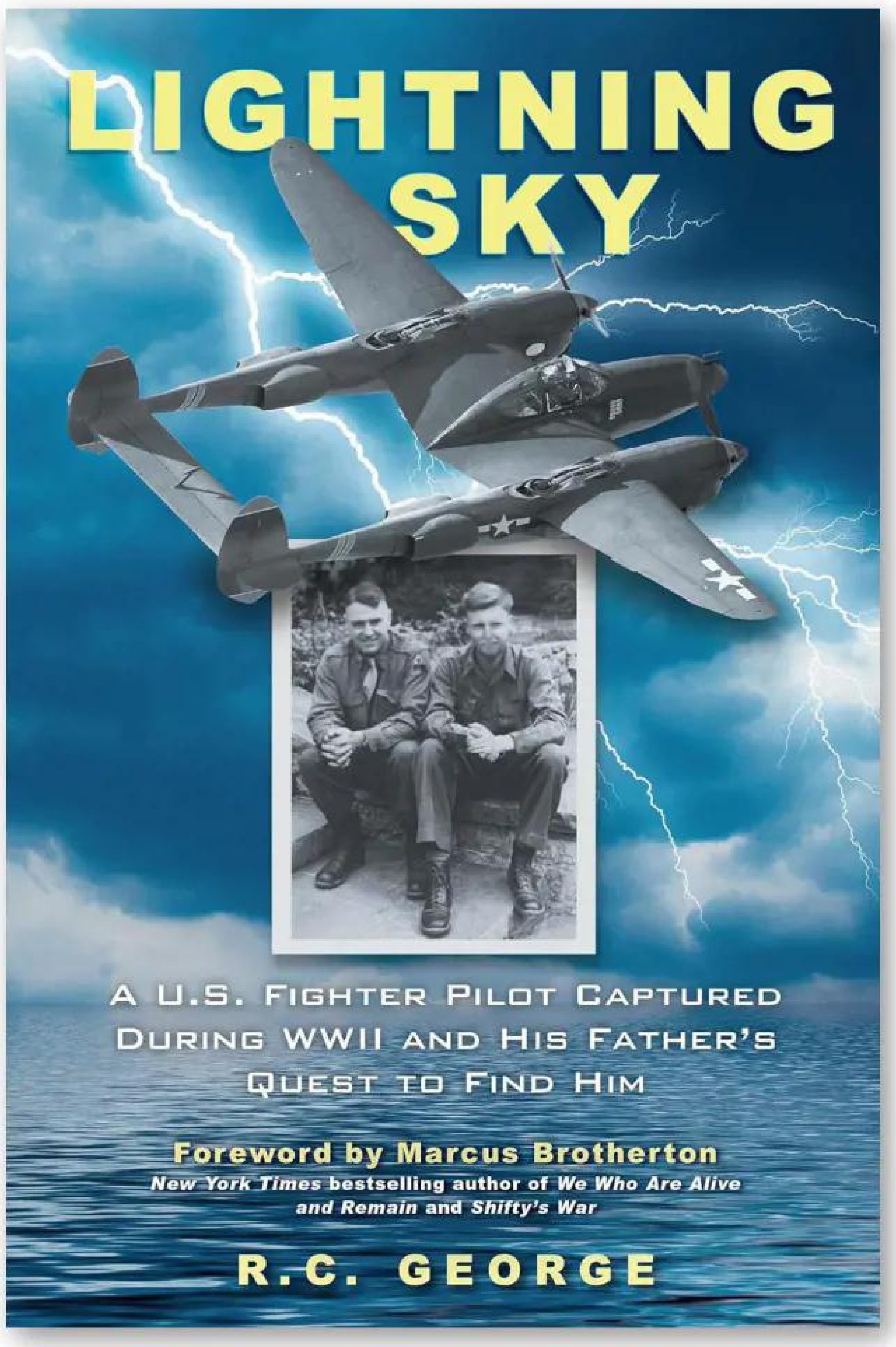
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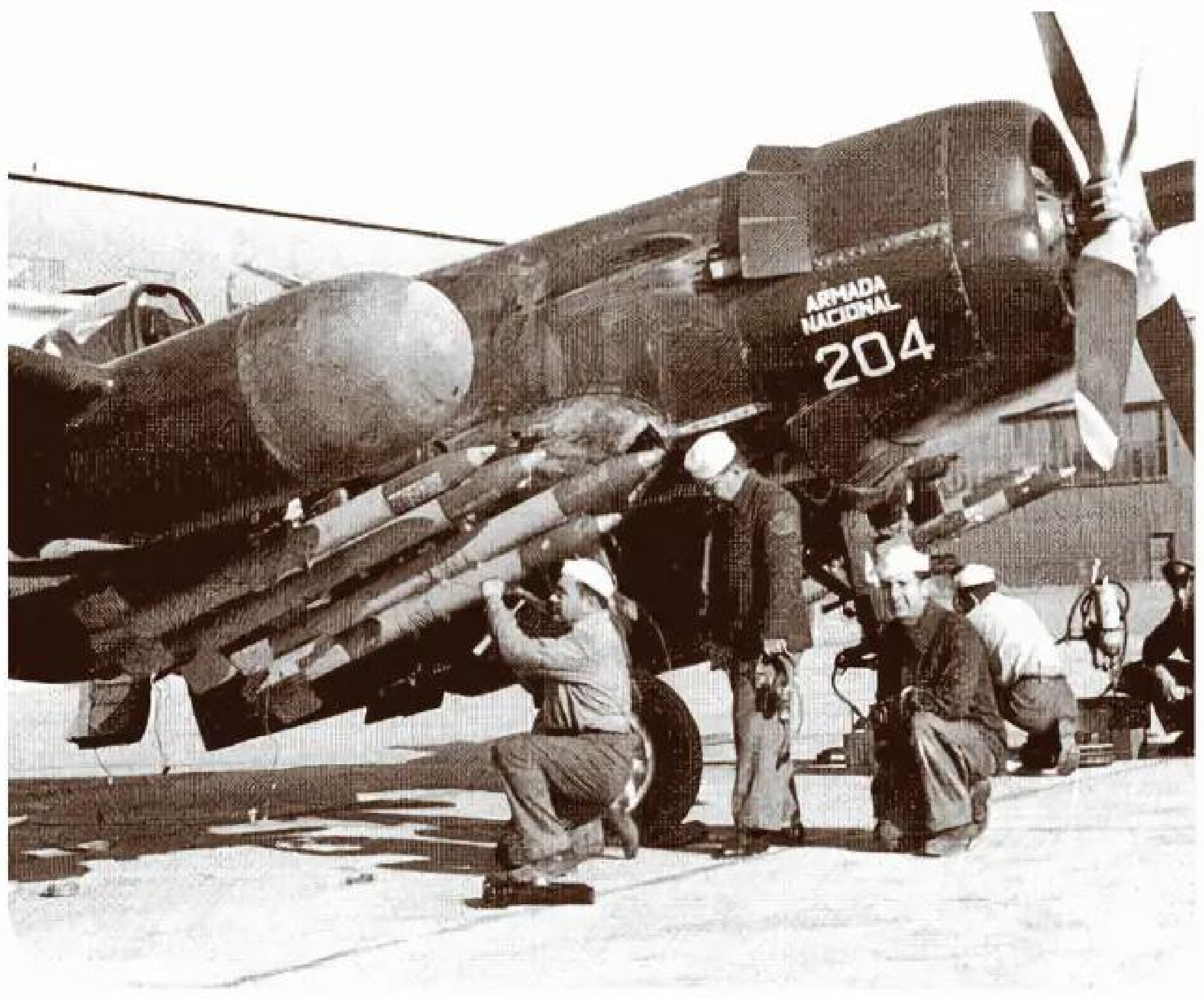
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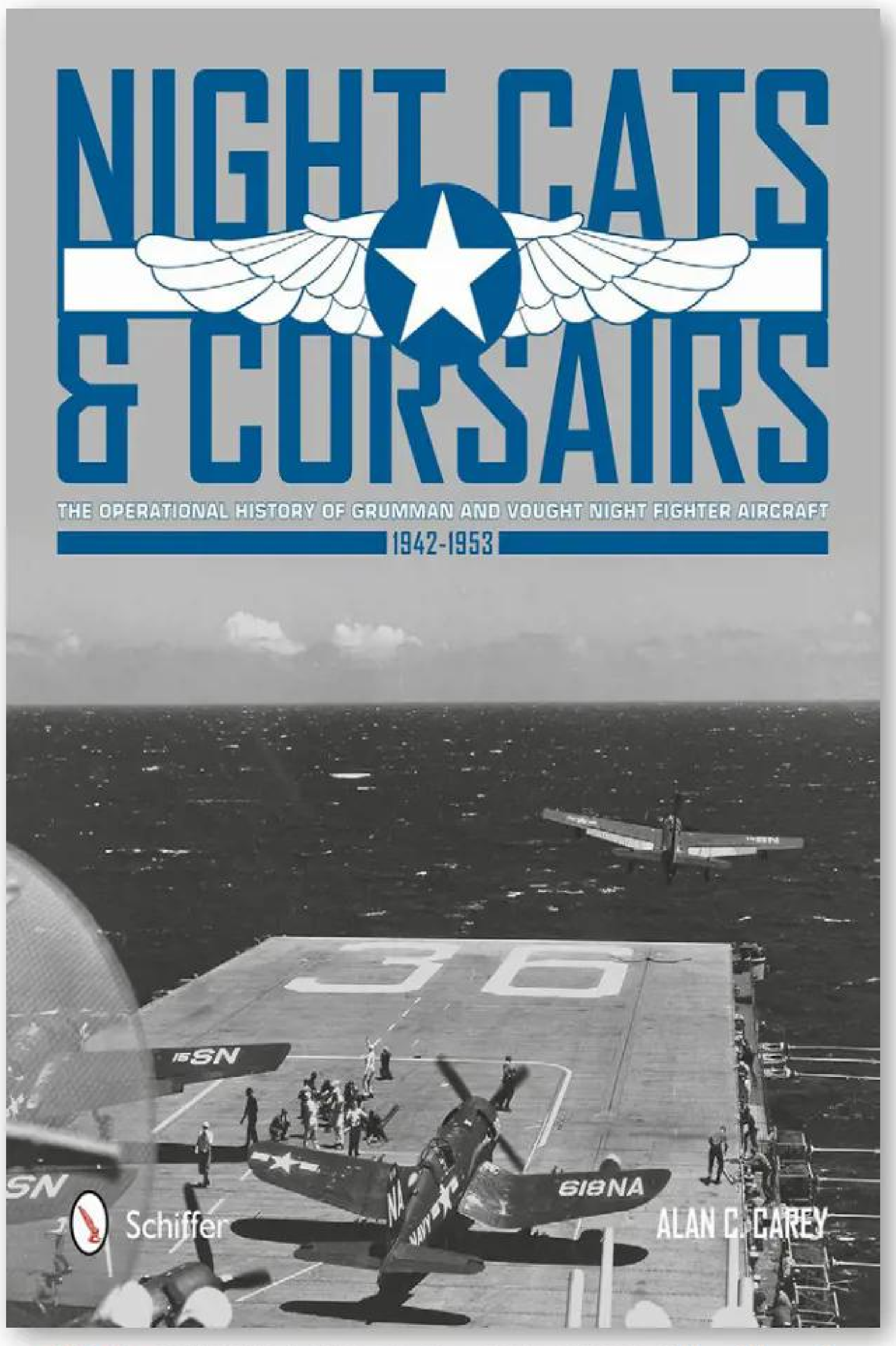
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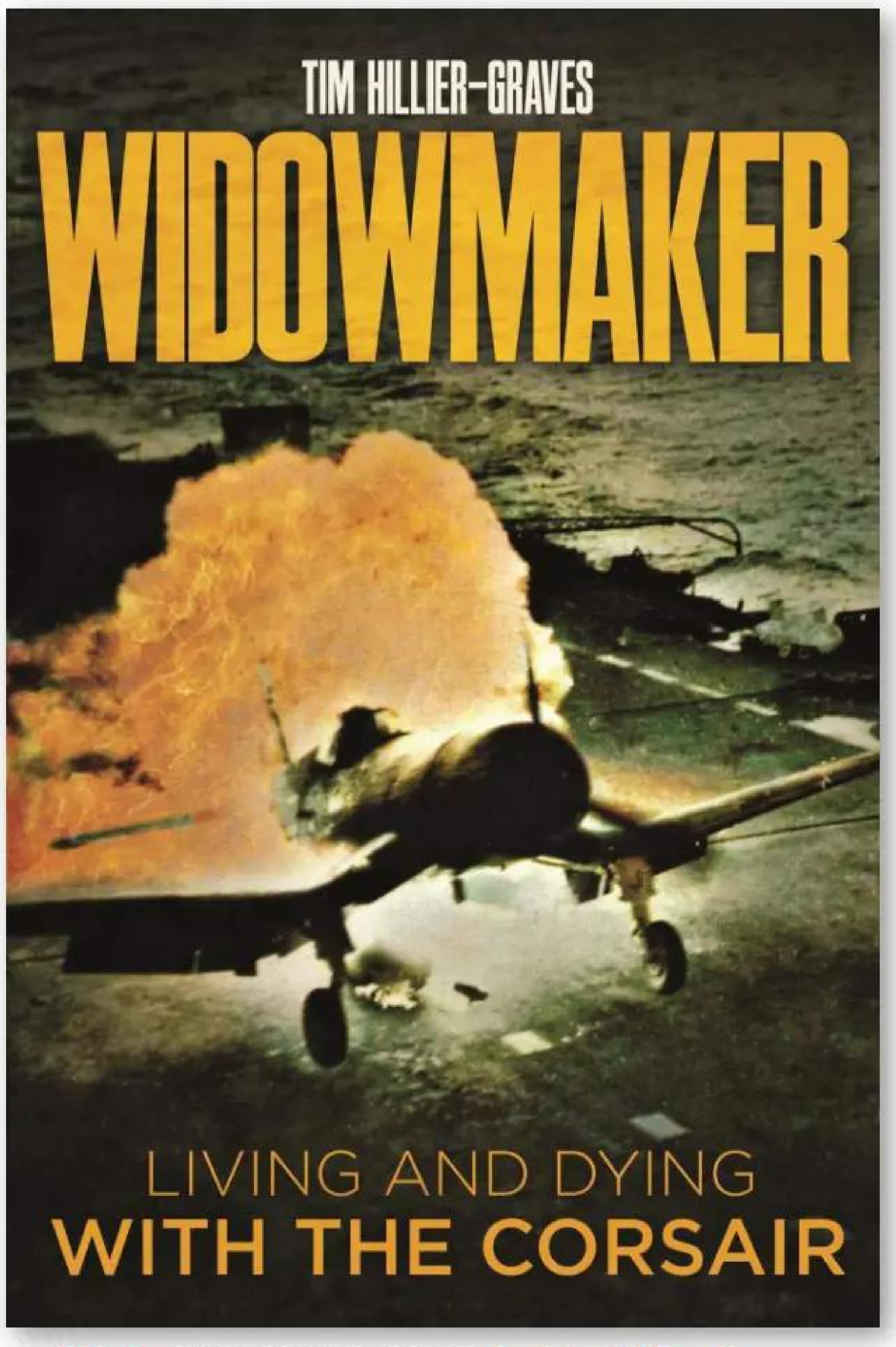
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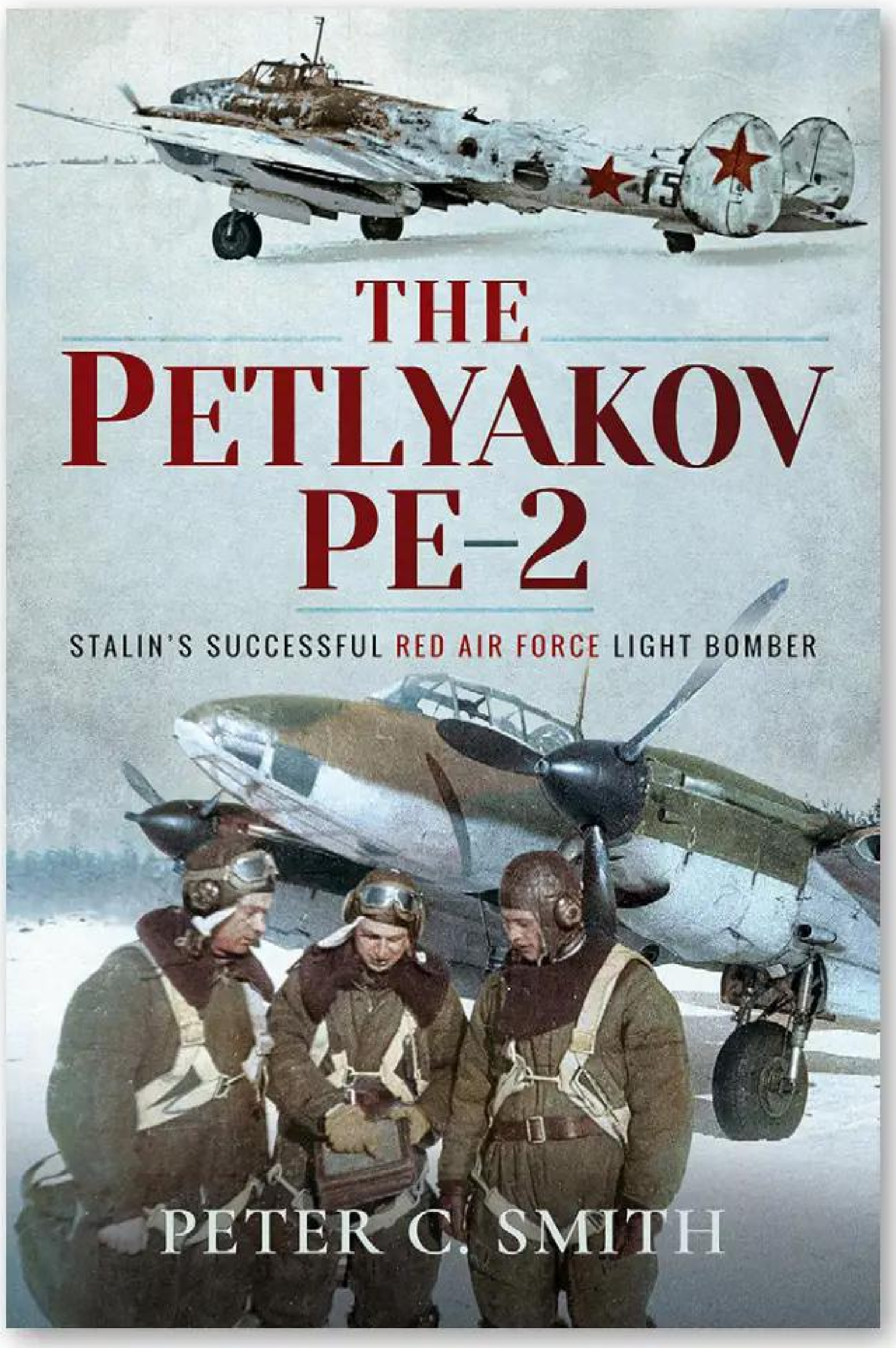
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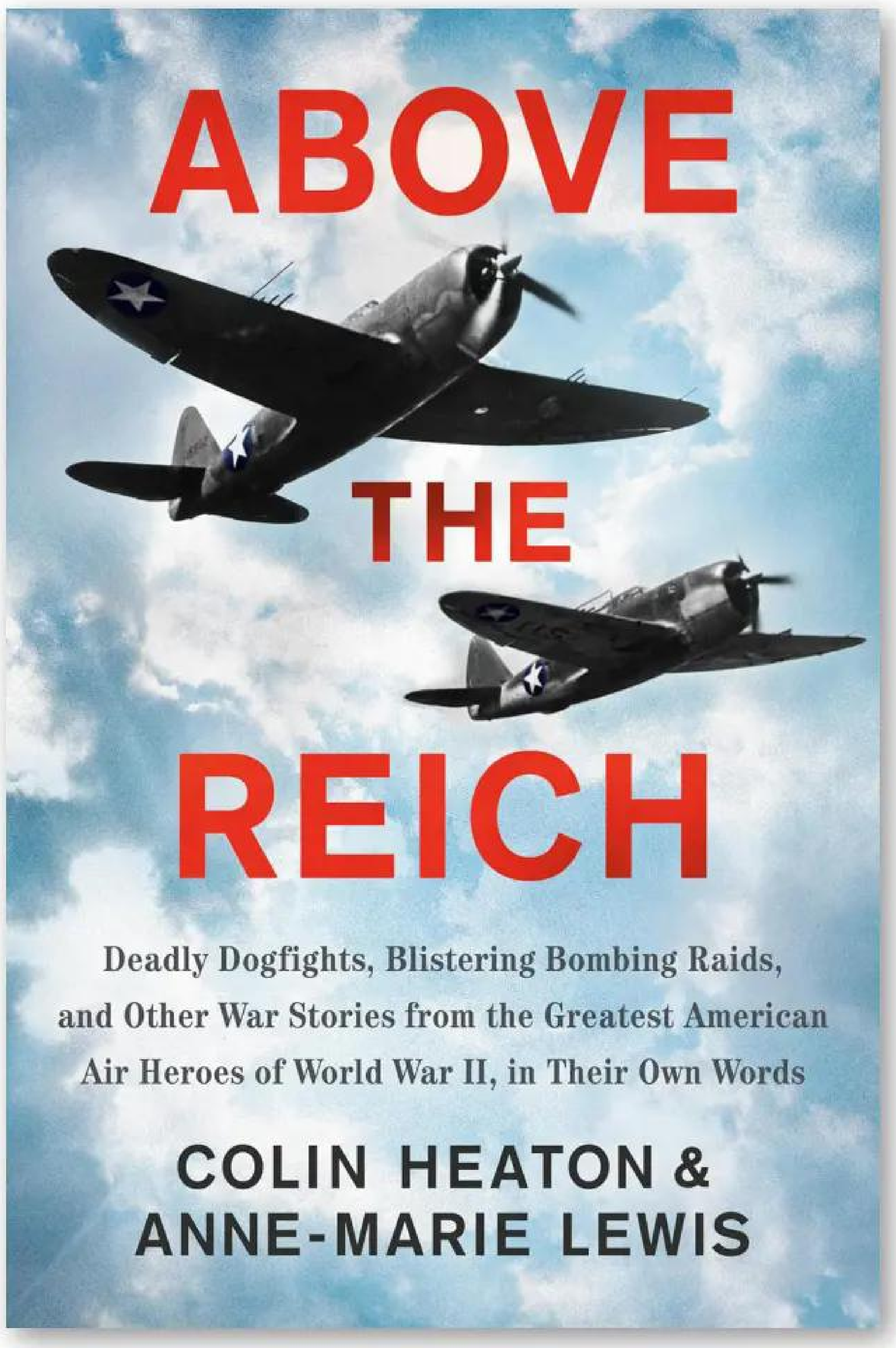
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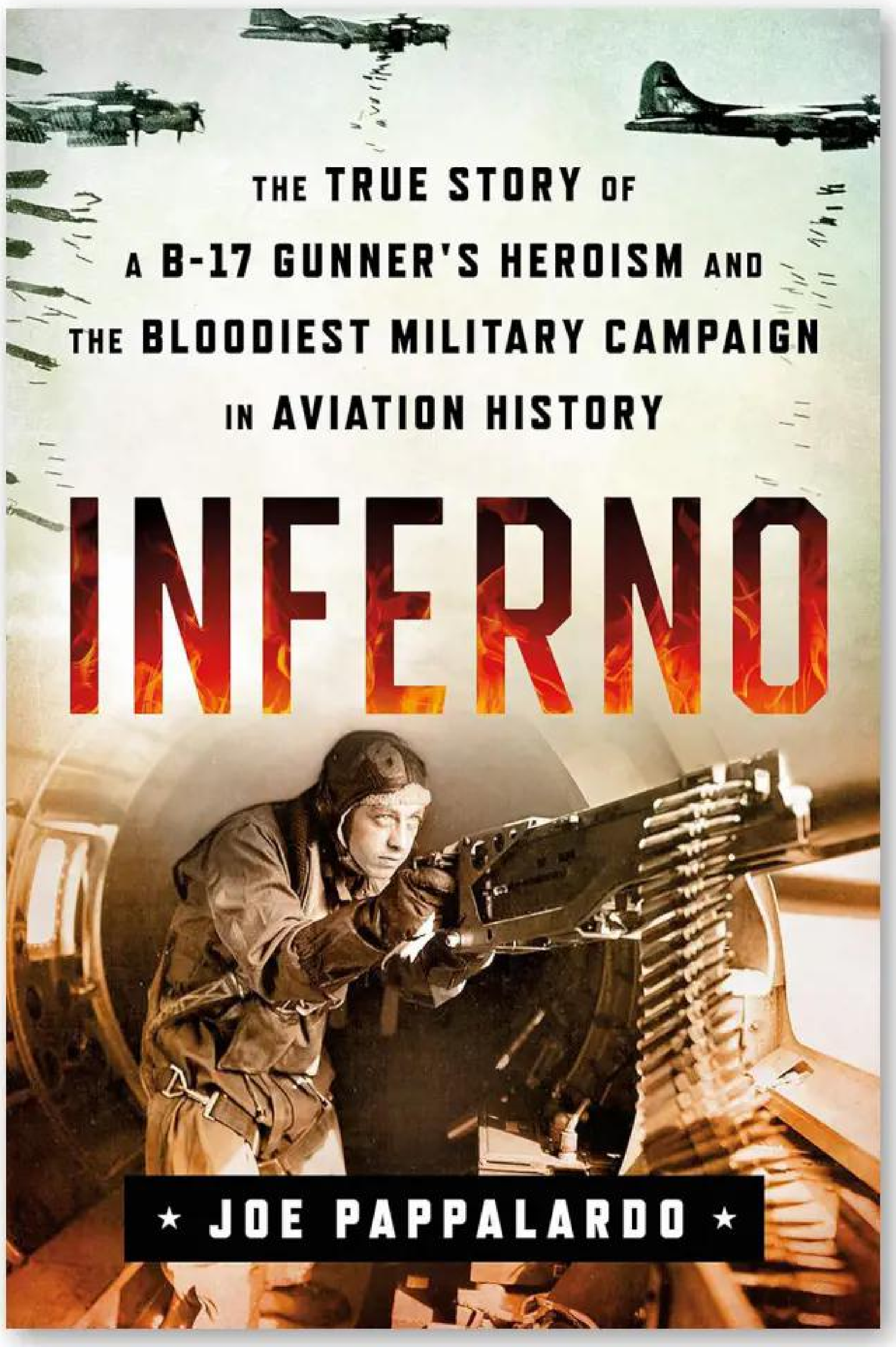
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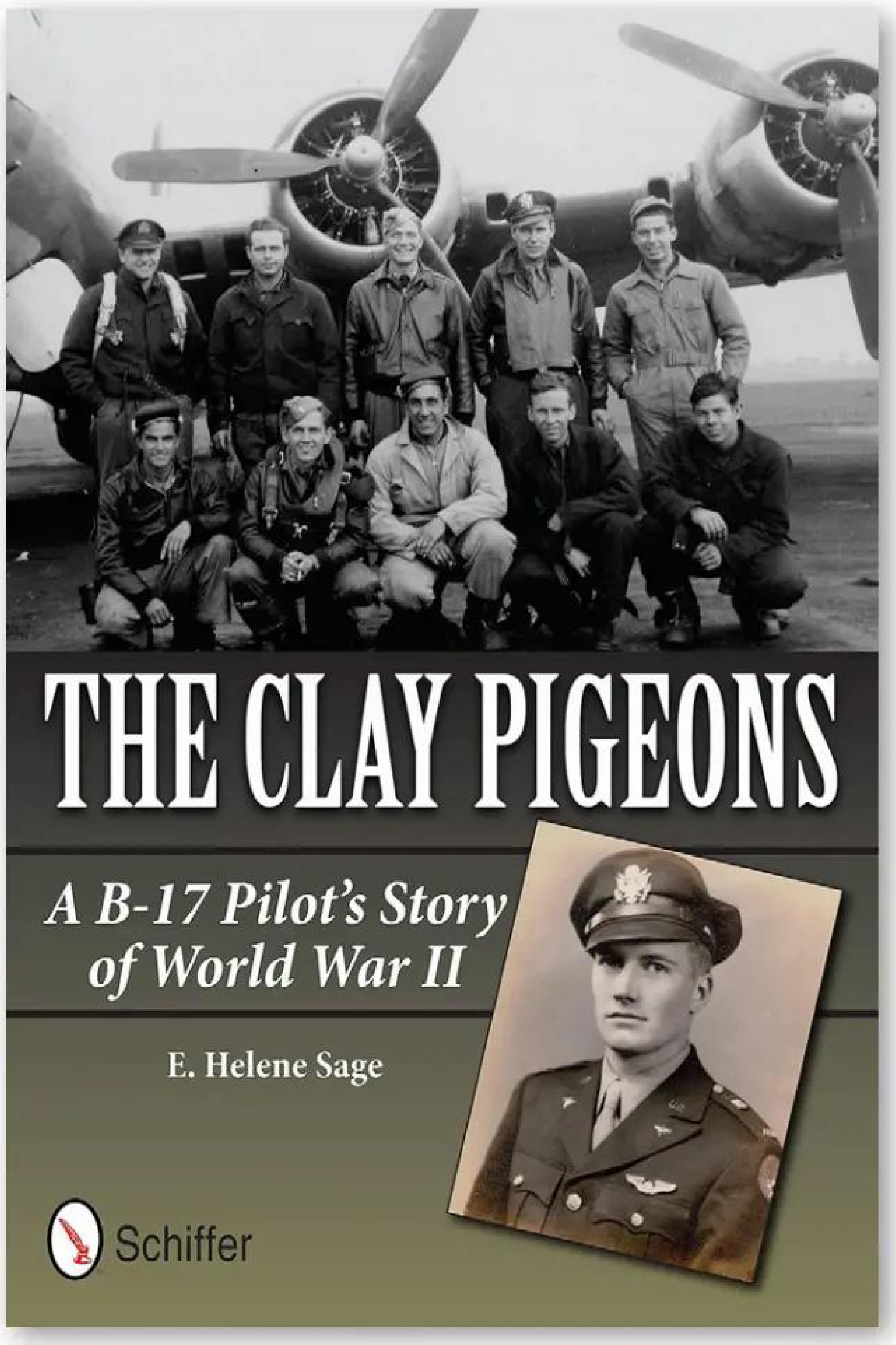
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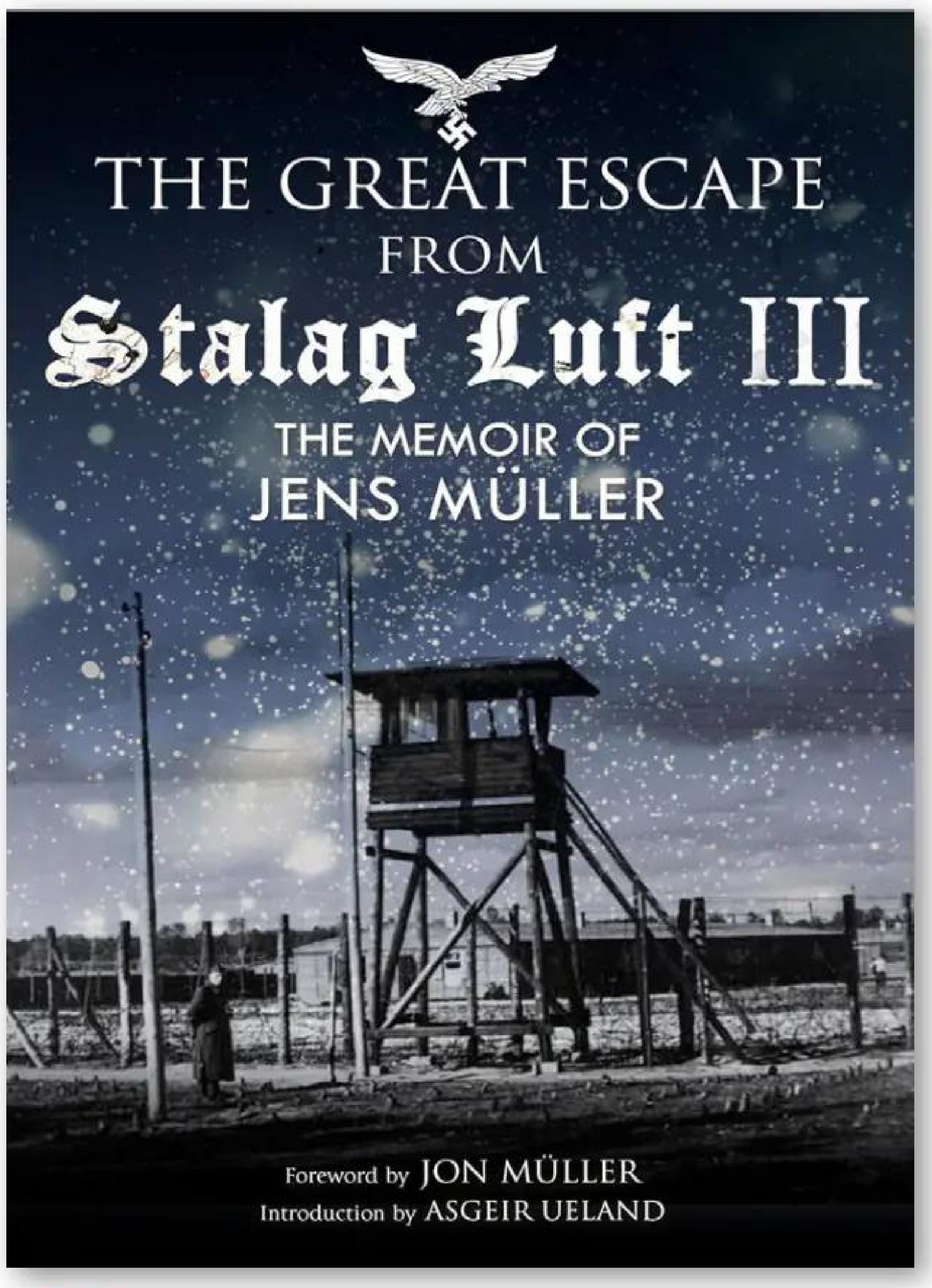
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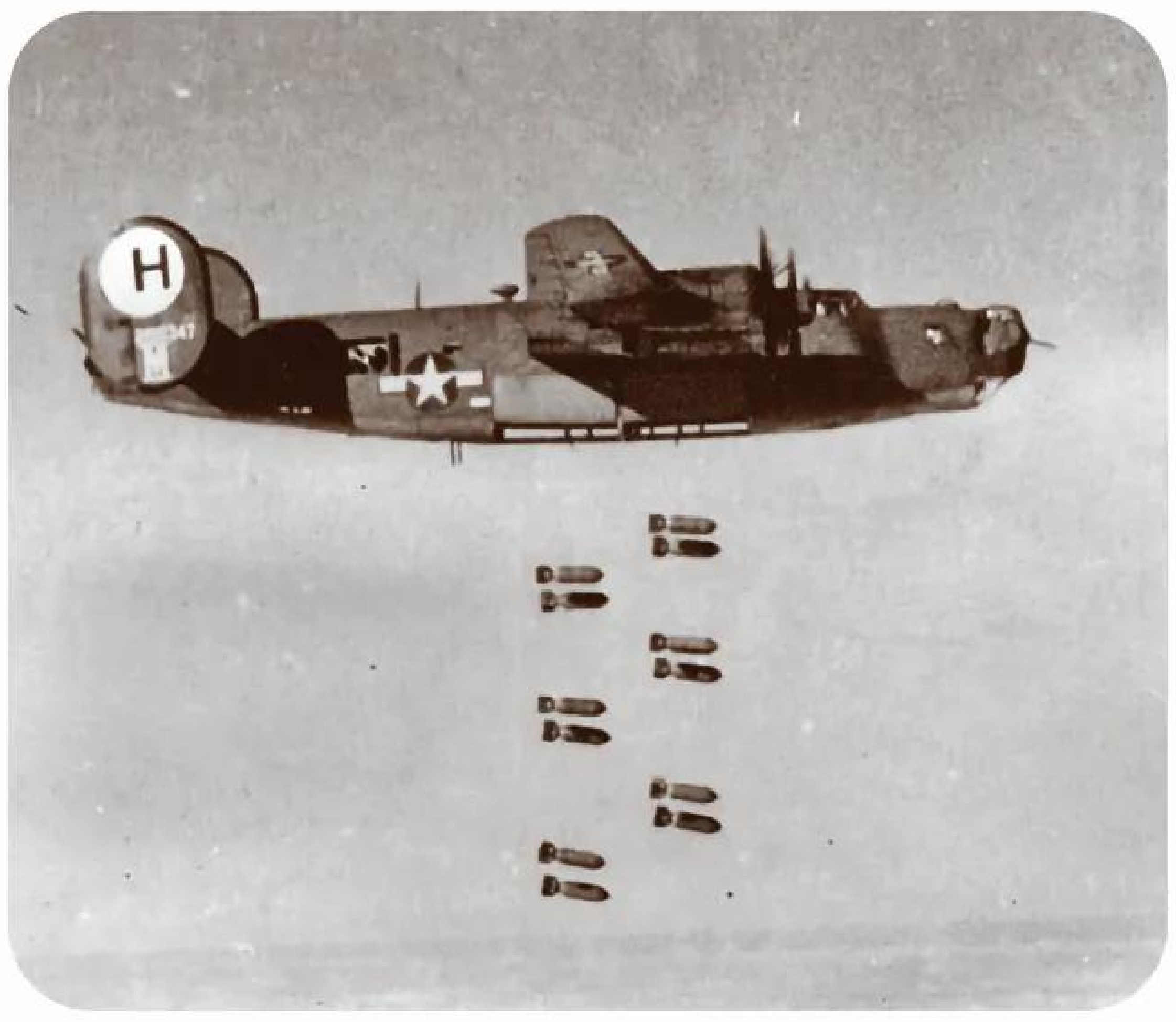

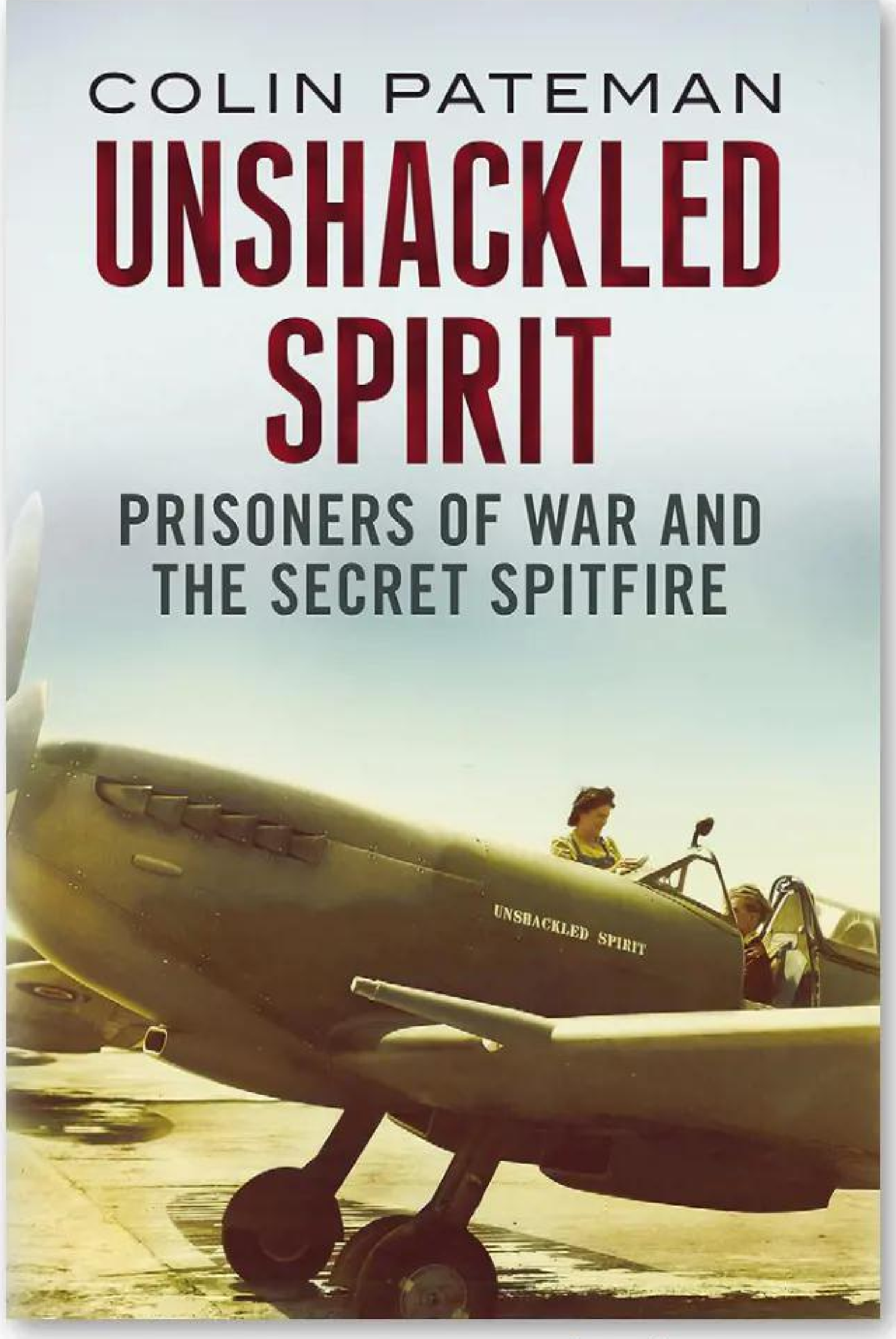
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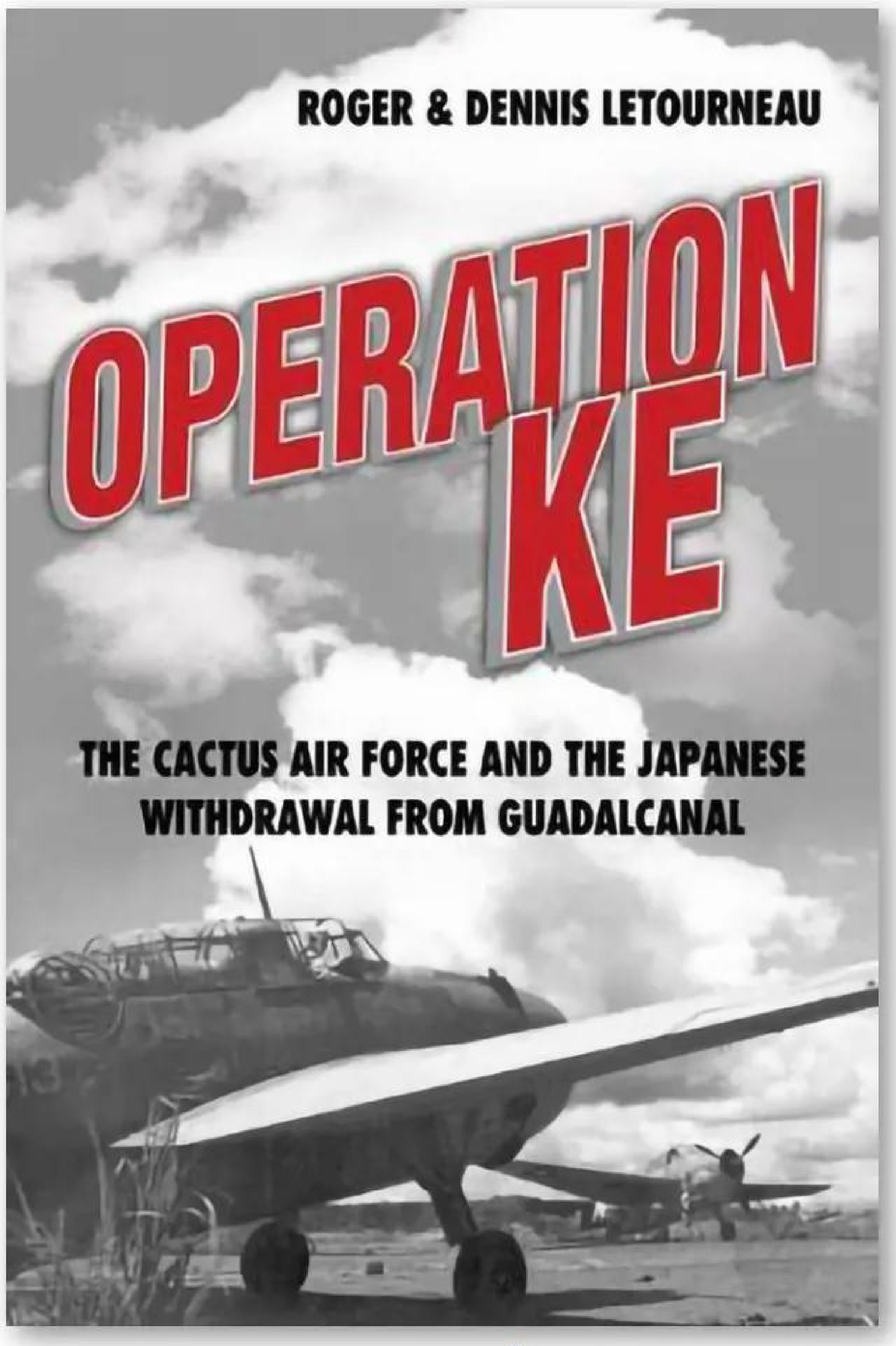
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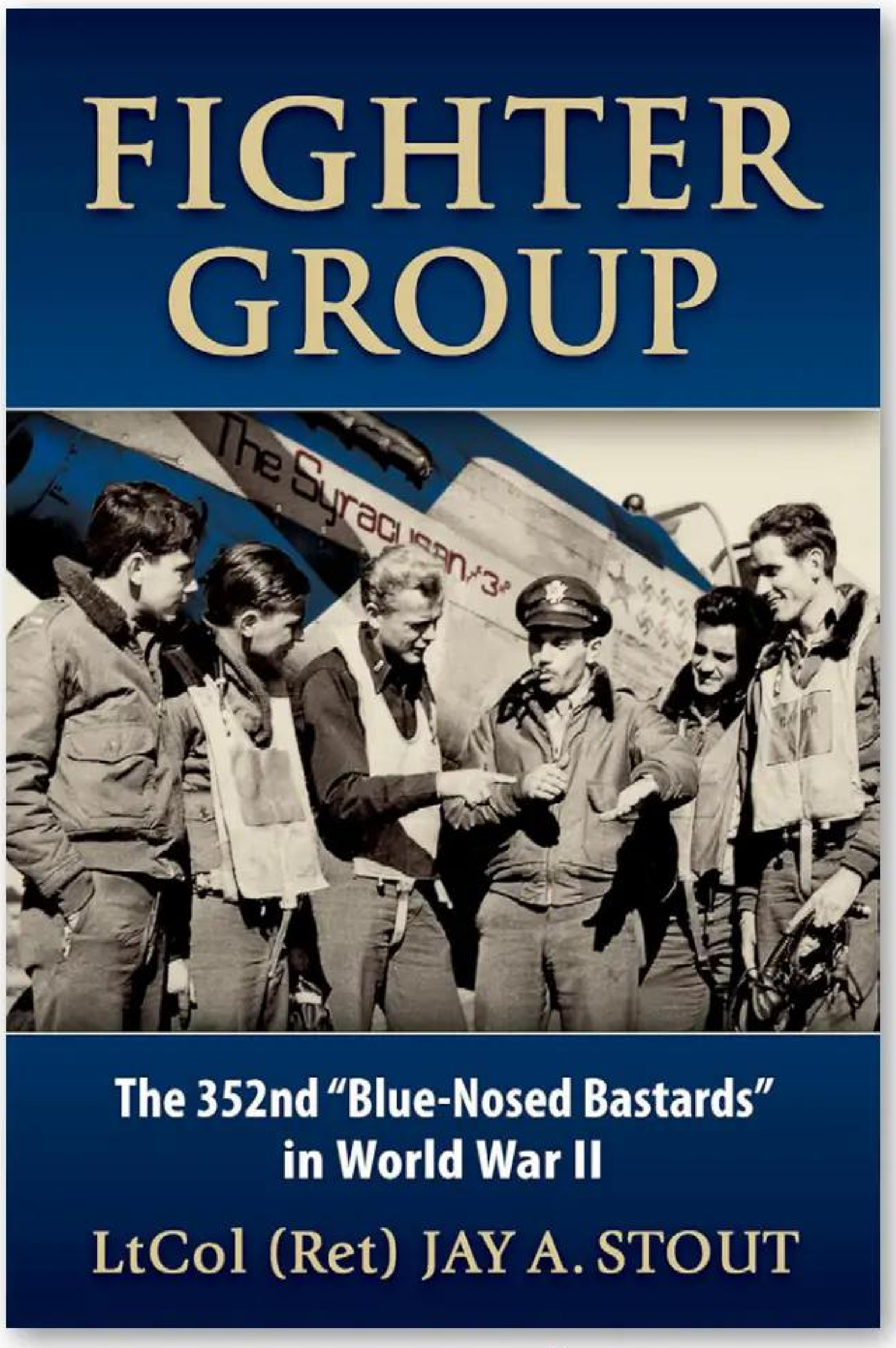
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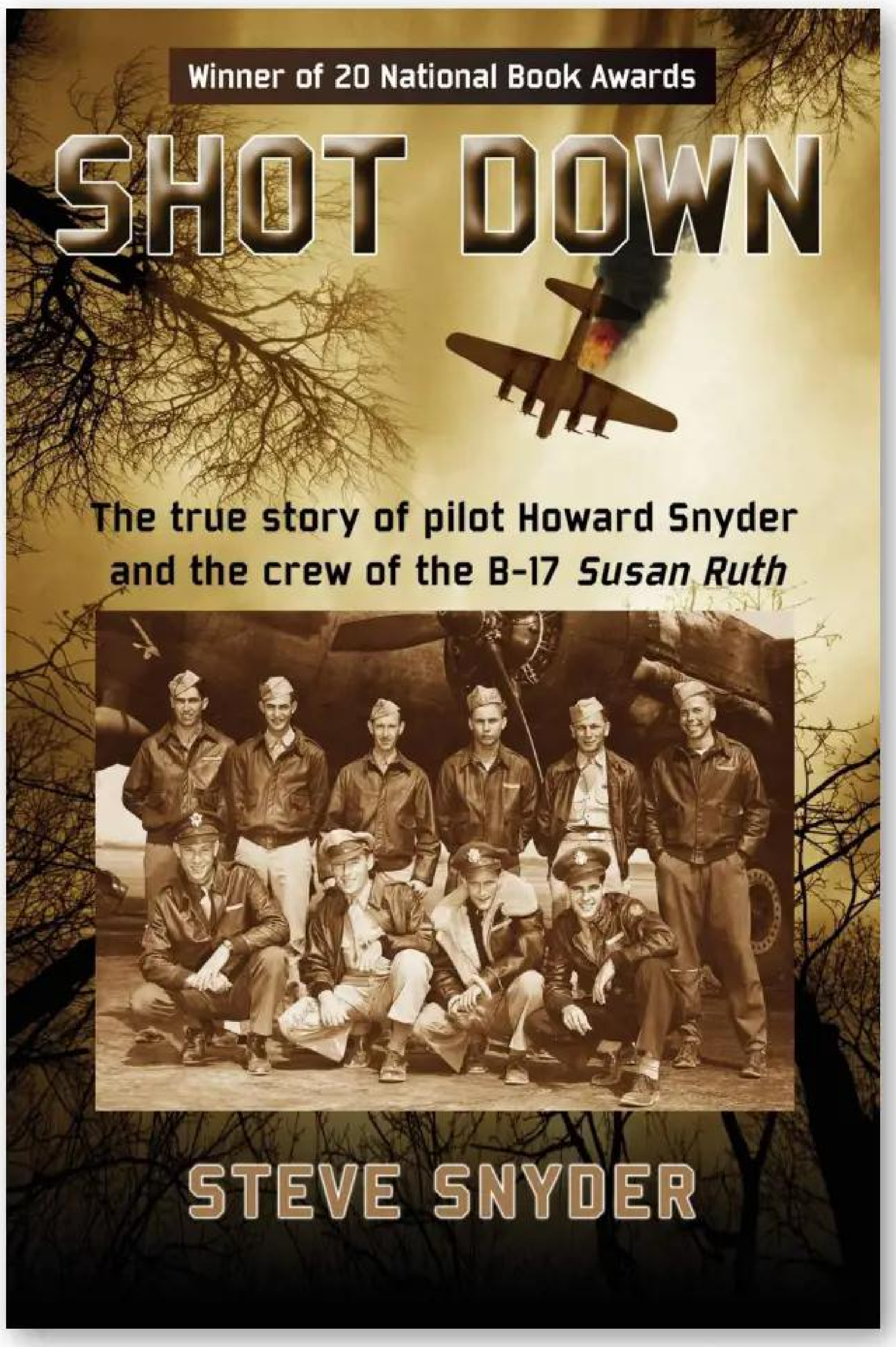
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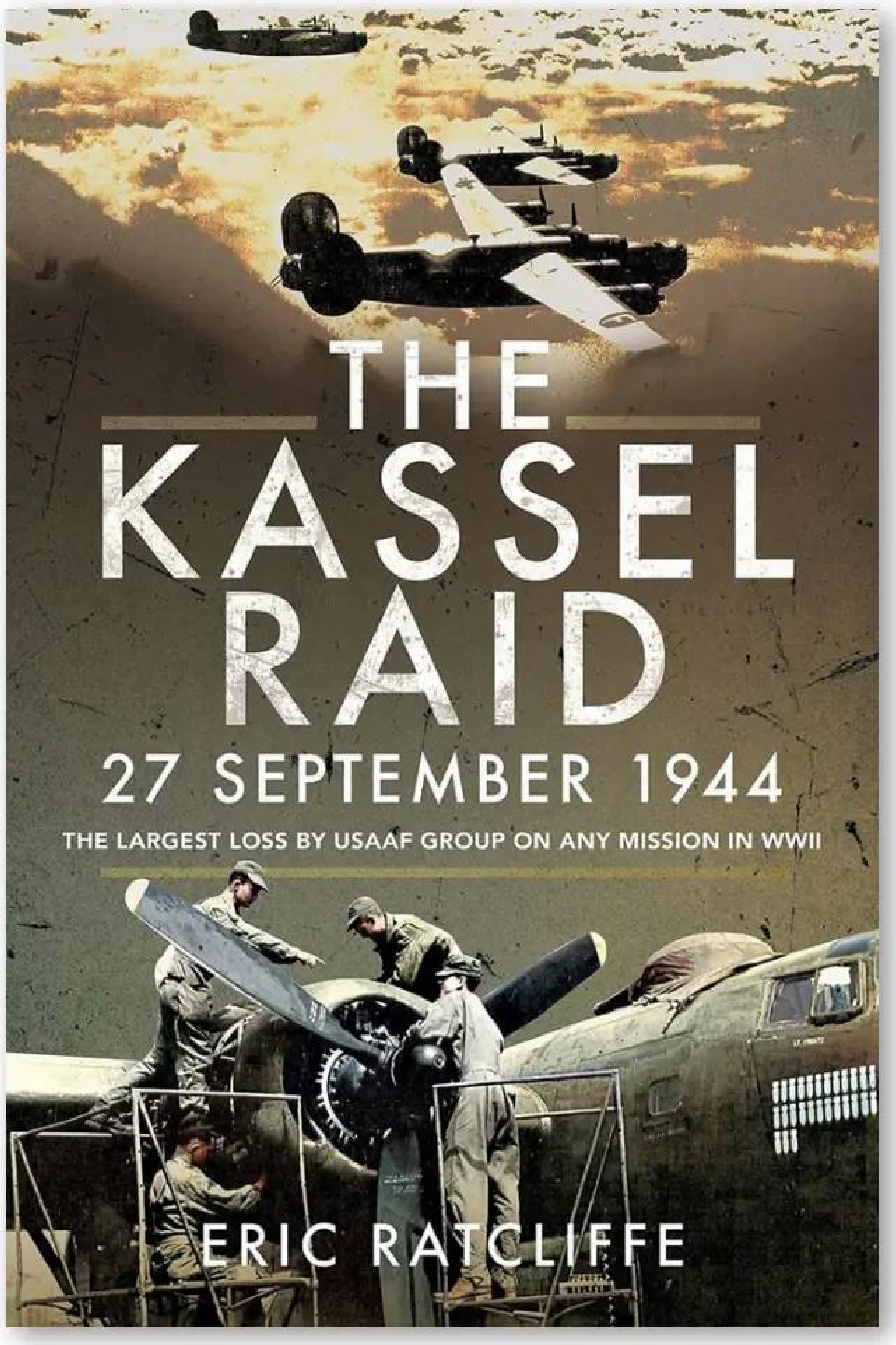
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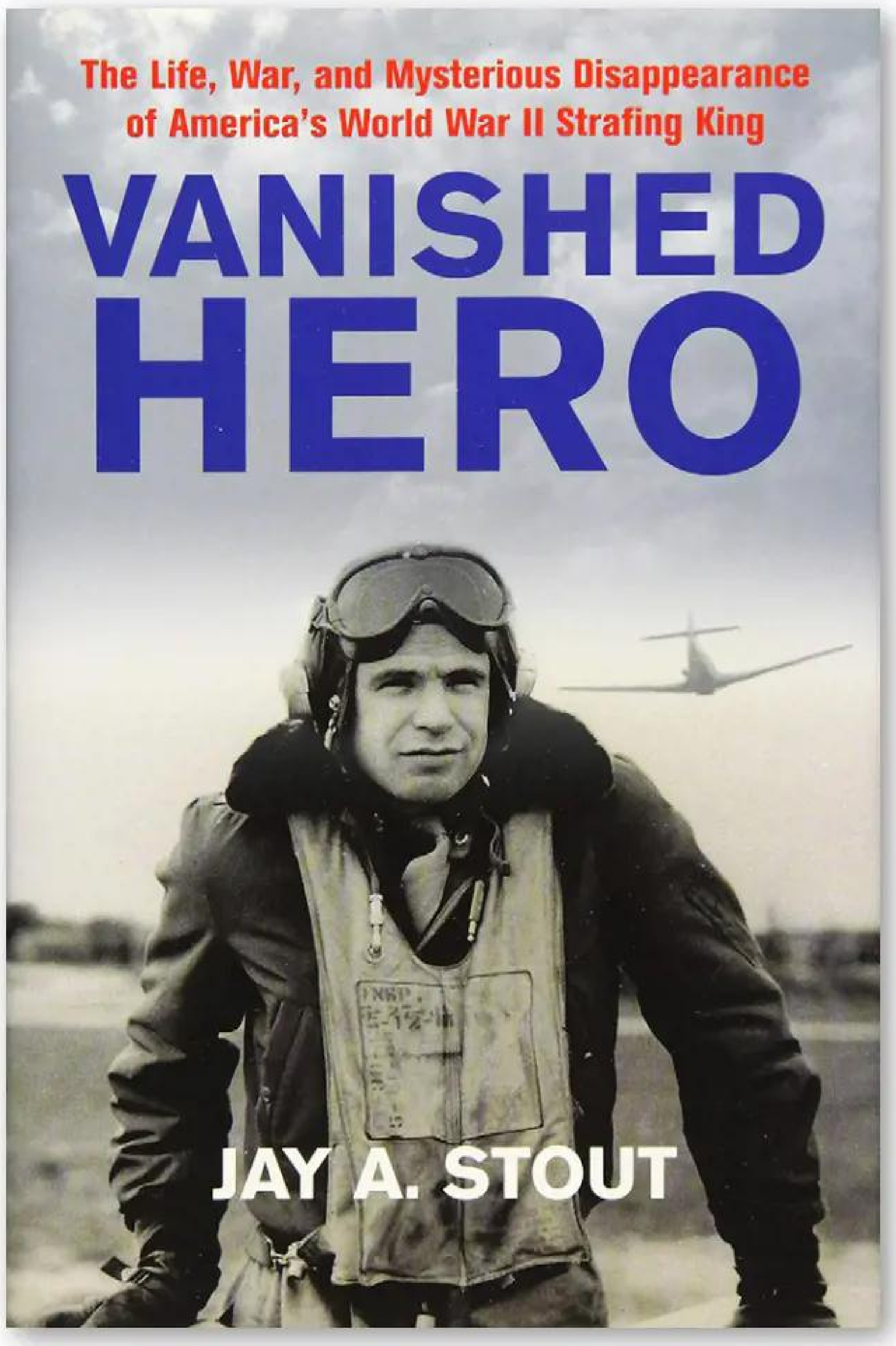
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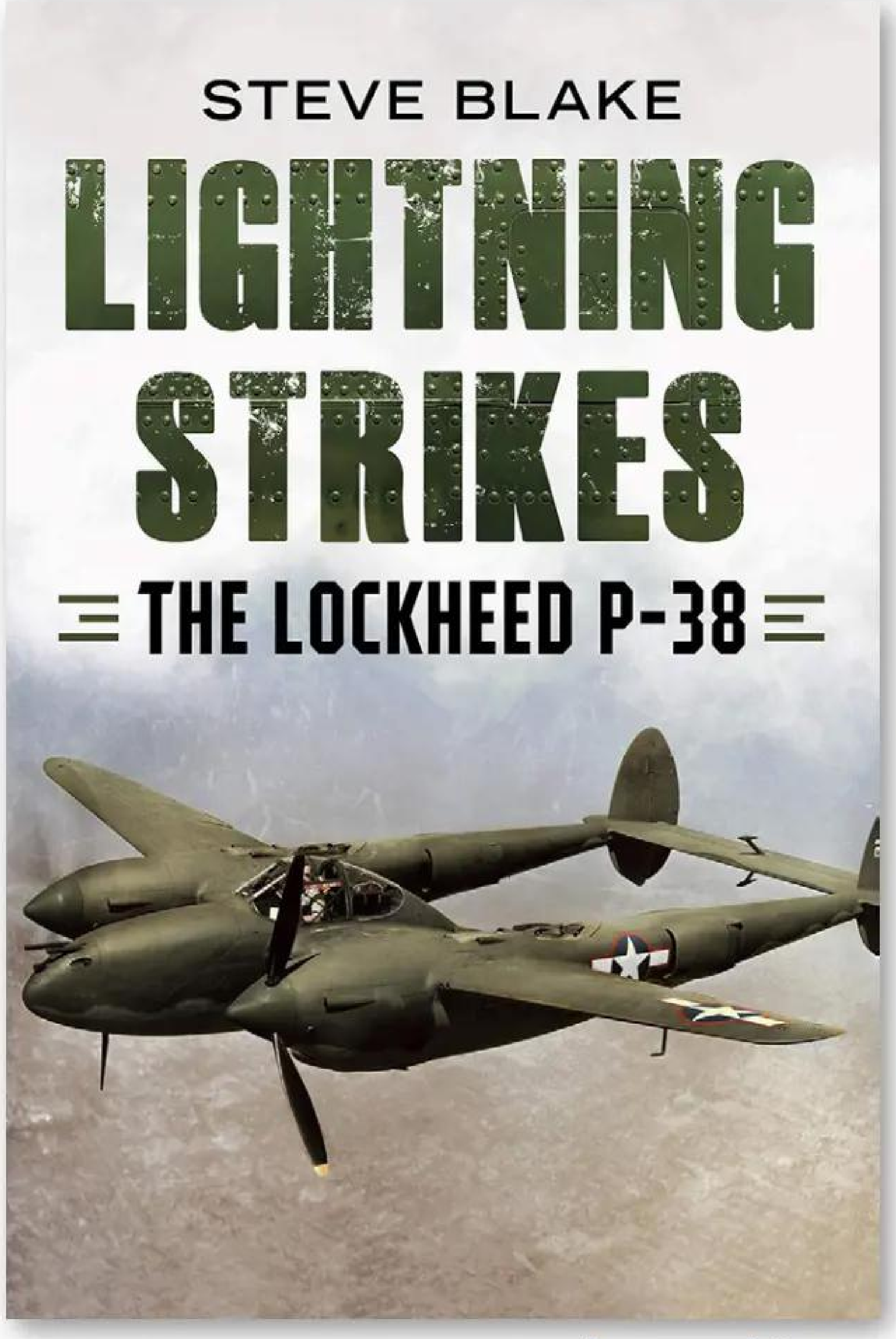

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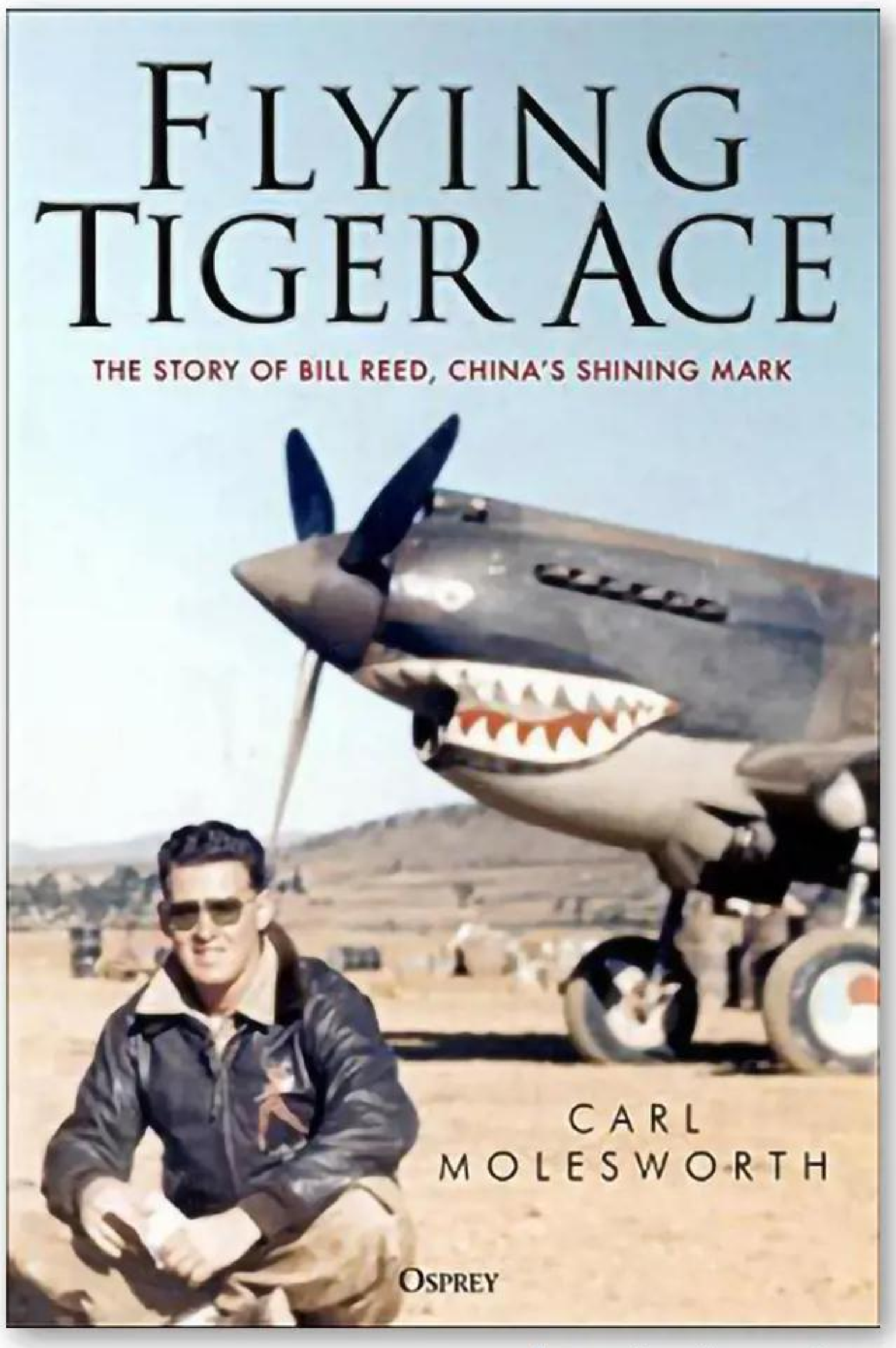

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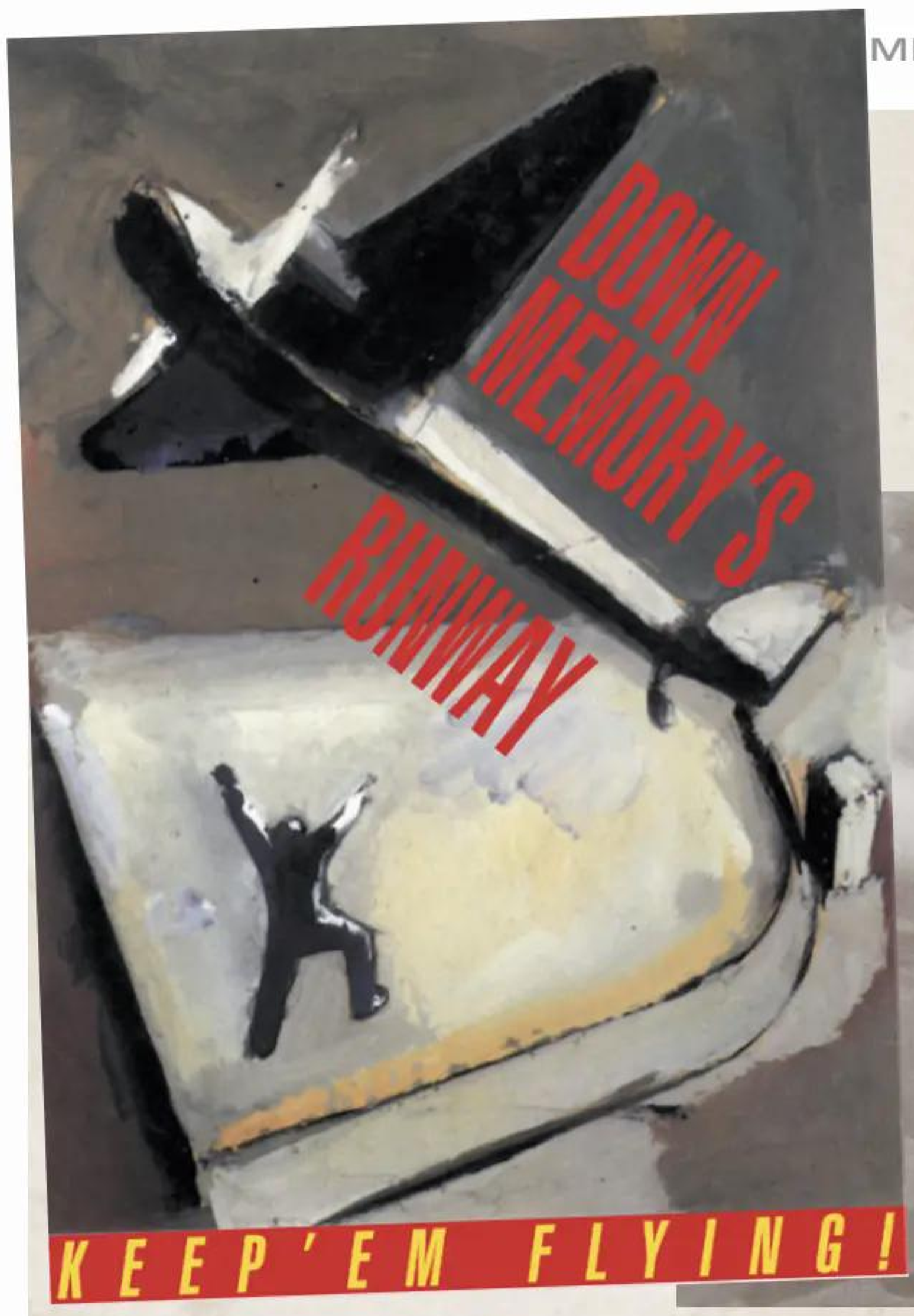

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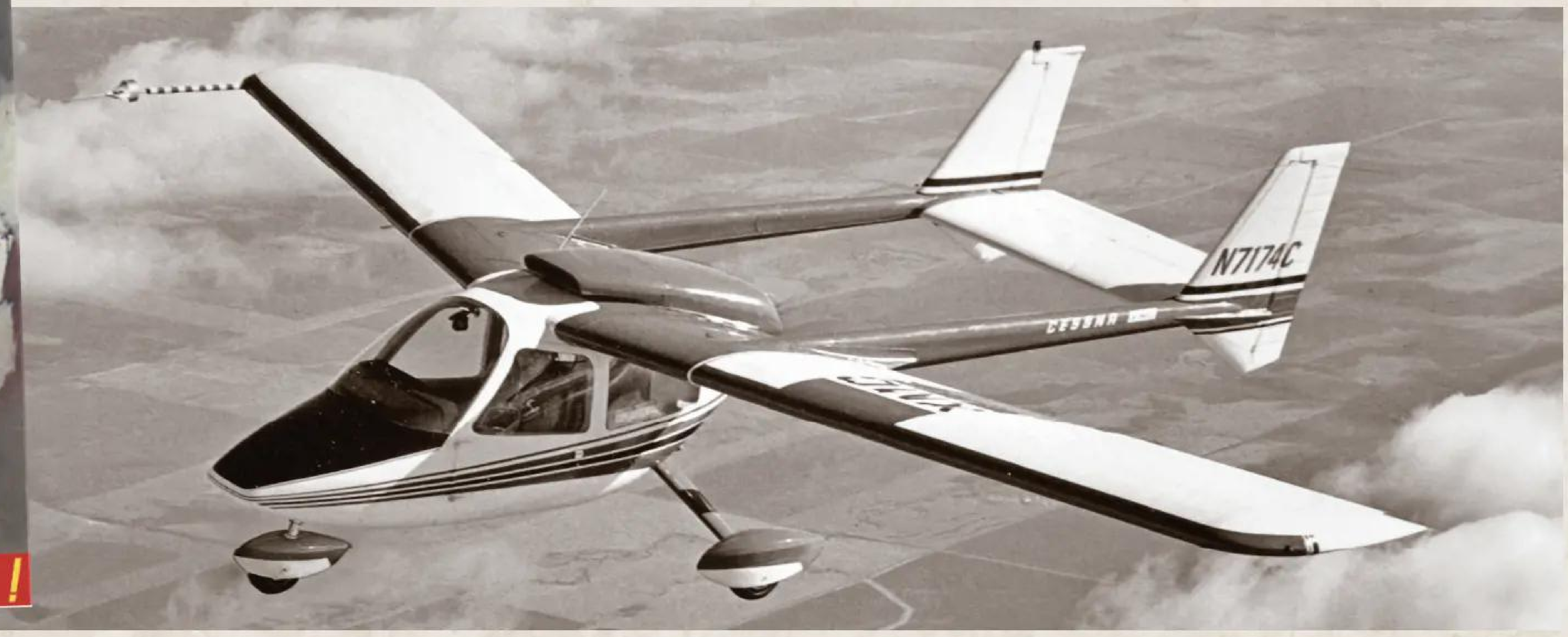
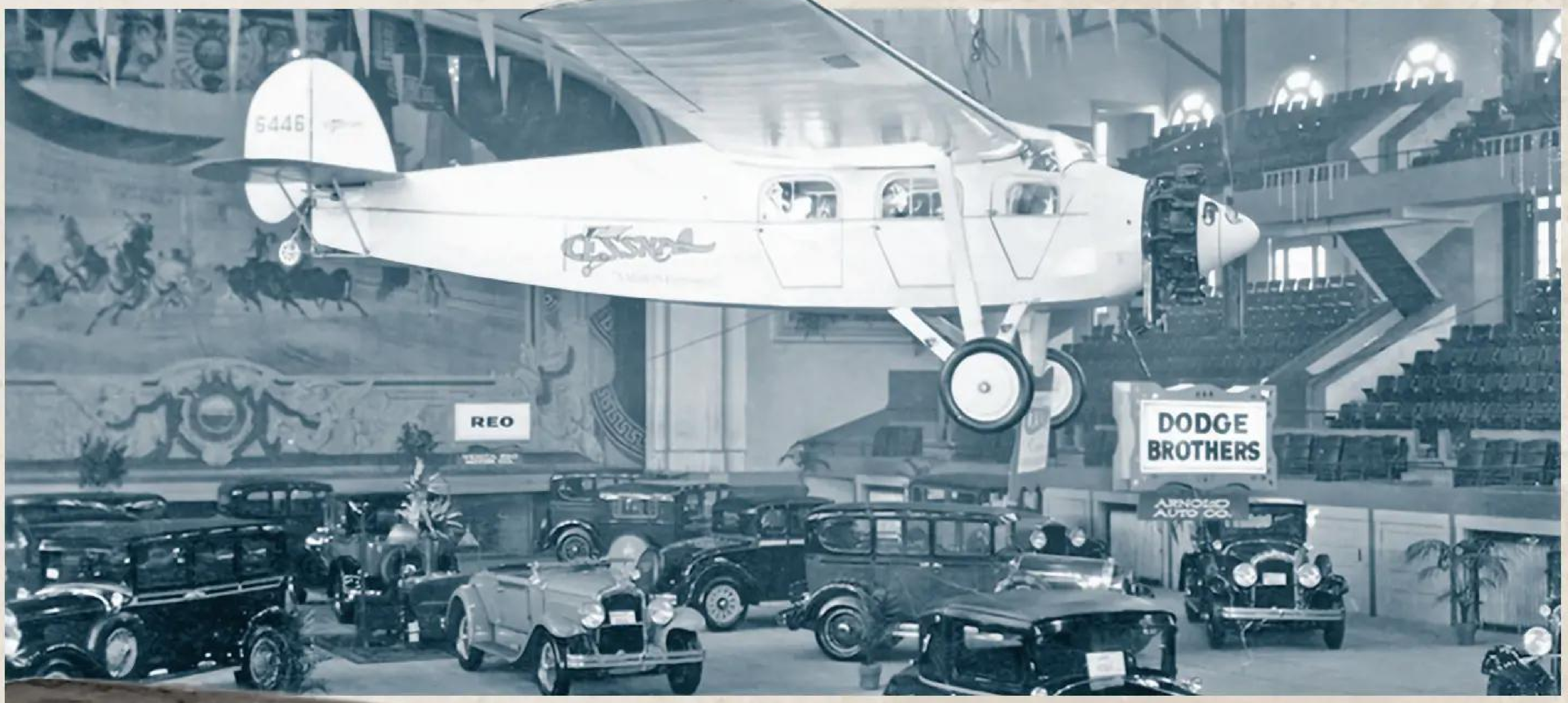
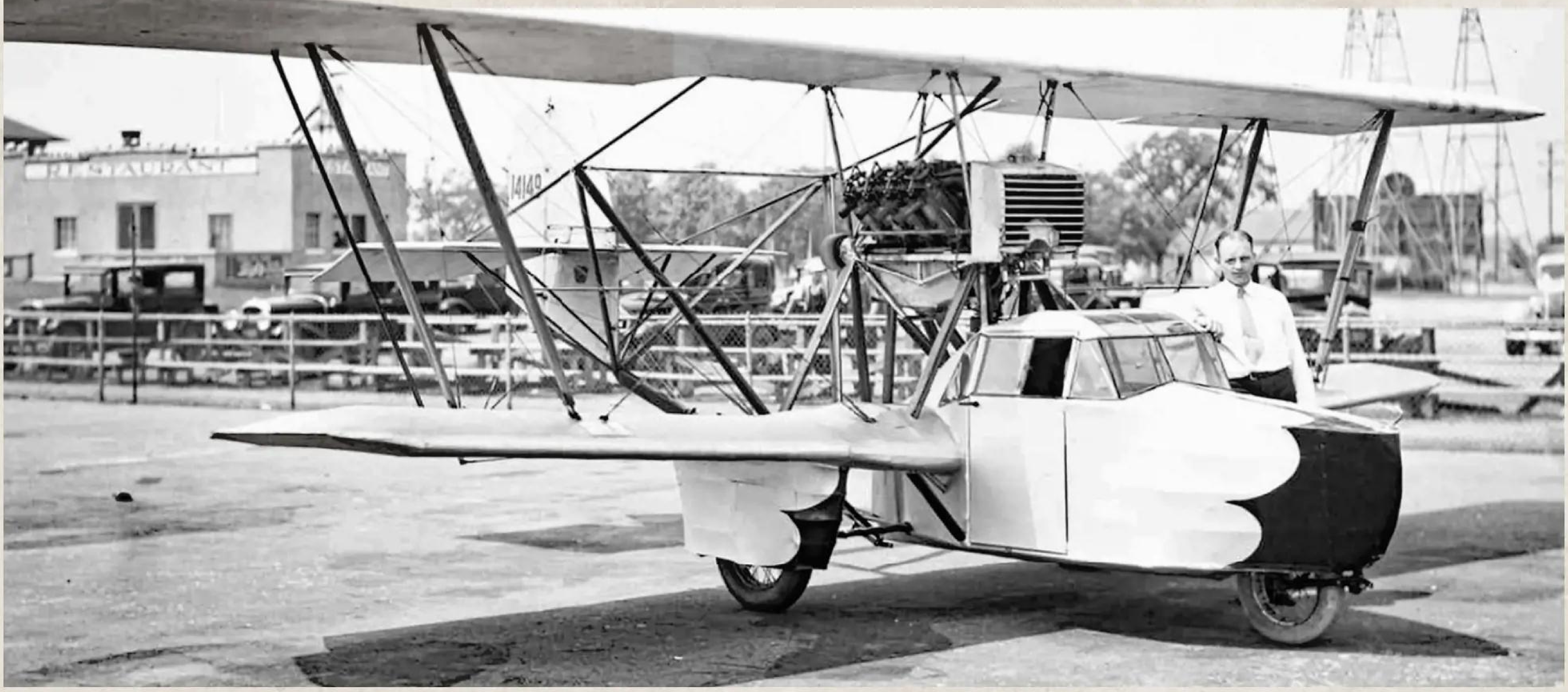
BY NORM TAYLOR



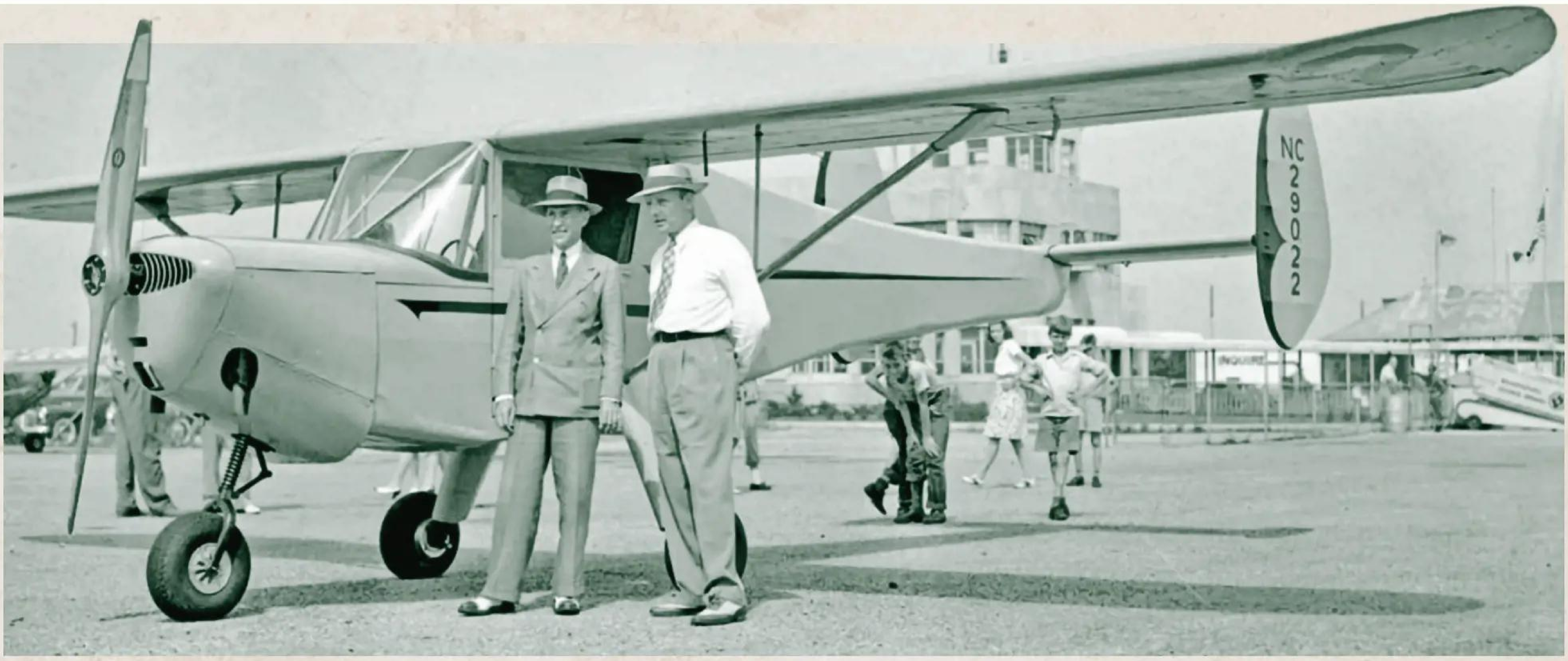
During the 1960s/1970s, major American civilian aircraft manufacturers experimented with new designs in the hope of increased general aviation performance. Cessna built the rakish little two-seat Model 1014 XMC (Xperimental Magic Carpet) as a possible replacement for the venerable 150/152 series of trainers and small touring aircraft. With its twin booms, sweptback wing panels, metal-bonded construction, and fuselage “pod,” Cessna hoped the XMC would pave the way for a new generation of such flying machines. One prototype was built with the registration N7174C, and it was tested with several modifications including a shrouded propeller (Model 1034). However, it was discovered that the XMC looked nice and featured very good visibility but had no real performance advantages over the 150/152. Plus, there were heating problems with the rear-mounted engine. The final fate of the plane is not known.



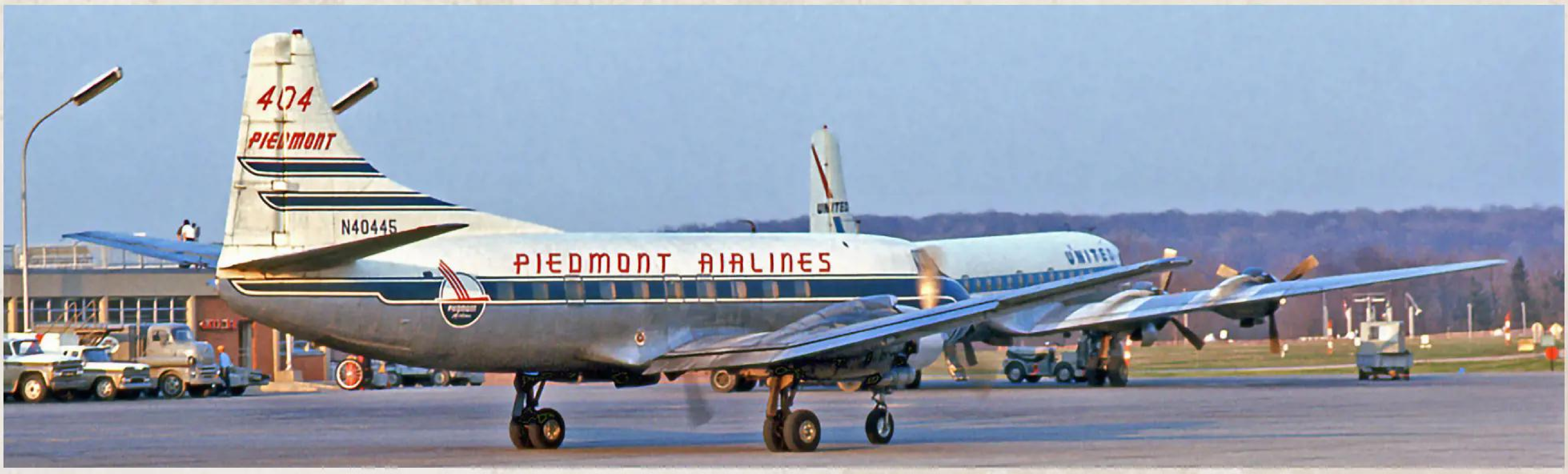
Another Cessna prototype, but one from a decidedly earlier generation. Seen displayed at the February 1929 Wichita Auto Show, the Cessna CW-6 was mounted as if in flight above a number of new autos. Registered NC6446. The plane was an attractive six-seater that first went aloft during November 1928. Unfortunately, the Great Depression put an end to any production plans and the craft was sold in Mexico as X-BACX, where it eventually disappeared. The design was scaled down to the four-seat DC-6, which did enjoy a bit of success.



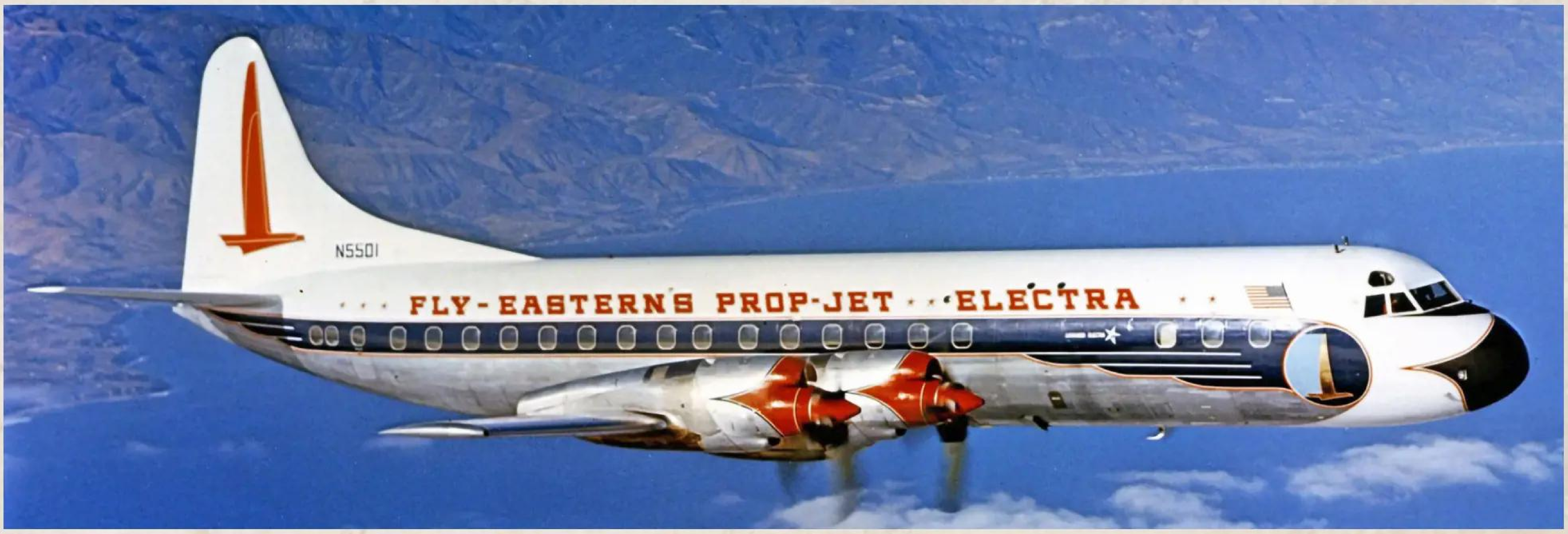
Not much is known about the Clinger CL-1 except that it was apparently built in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Power came from a war-surplus Curtiss OX-5 engine and the CL-1 carried the registration 14149. It almost appears to have some amphibious qualities but it is doubtful if it ever went in the water. Two-seat pod held the pilot and a passenger.



The General Aircraft G1-80 was marketed as a "spin-proof" aircraft. Photographed on 23 July 1941 in front of the Grand Rapids Municipal Airport's just-completed Art Deco terminal building, NC29022 was registered between 1941 and 1948. Built in a stable behind the company president's house in Lowell, Massachusetts, it is thought 17 or 18 examples were constructed before the USA entered WWII. After the war, an attempt was made to restart production but there was already a glut of aircraft. NC29022 survives and is displayed at the Plymouth County Historical Museum in Iowa.



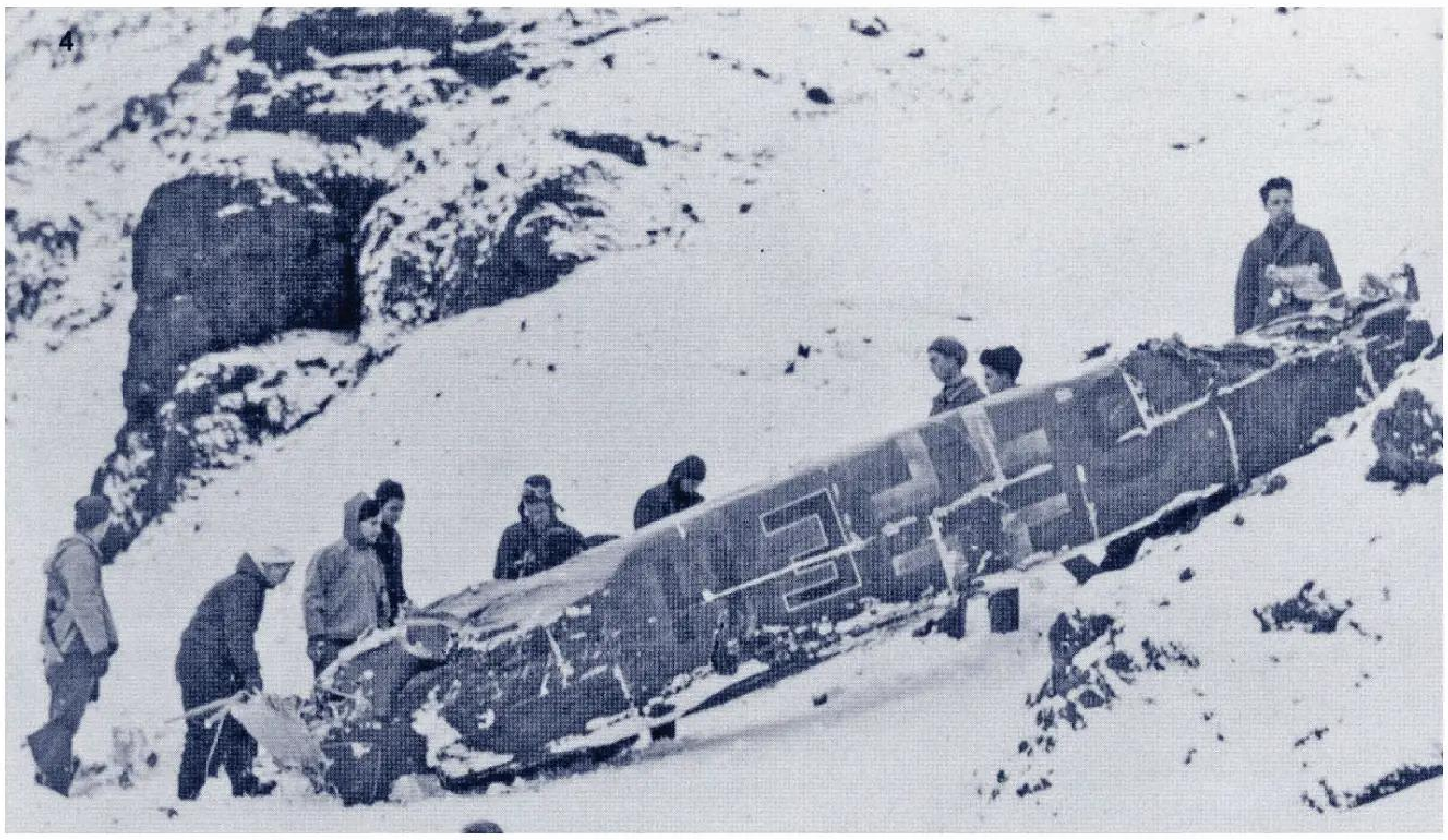
Built in relatively large numbers, the Martin 2*0*2/4*0*4 series of airliners really never enjoyed the success of the Convair 240/340 series. Used as a feeder airliner, the type could cost-effectively operate from many of the nation's smaller airfields. Later in life, the series was plagued by corrosion problems and this led to the retirement of many aircraft. Today, it is thought that not one single example remains airworthy. N40445 was originally built for Eastern Airlines as N482A and was sold a decade later to Piedmont. The airliner was photographed at Columbus, Ohio, during April 1967. Converted to a large acreage bug sprayer, the Martin was destroyed when it crashed at Madera, California, on 15 June 1982 after an R-2800 radial failed on takeoff.



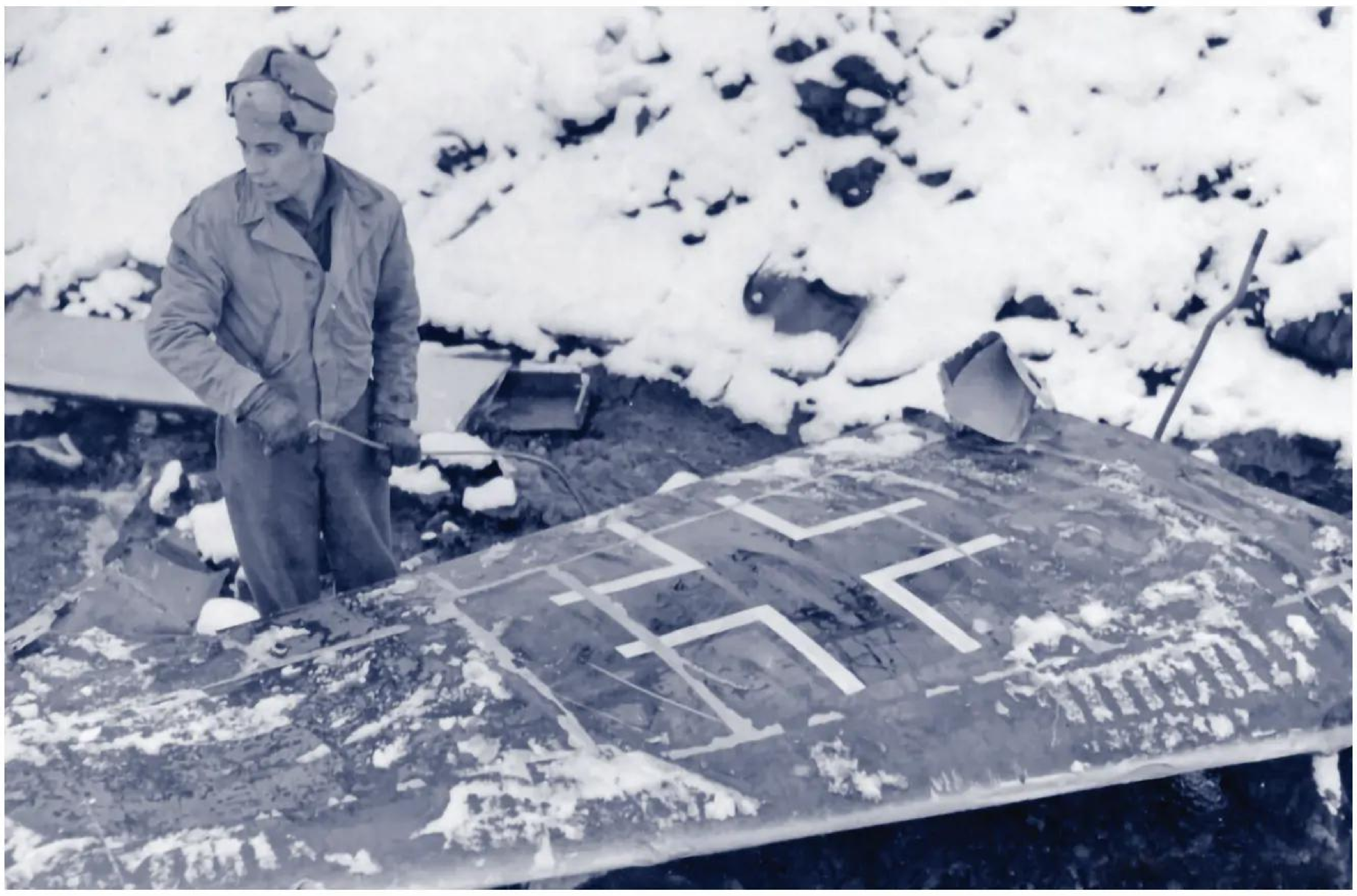
Lockheed had huge hopes for the new L.188 Electra when it appeared. Fast, economical, and capable of being operated out of smaller airports, L.188A N5501 was the first production Electra and it was delivered on 3 January 1959. However, structural problems and several fatal crashes would greatly blunt the type's success. As can be seen, Eastern gave a great deal of thought to the plane's color scheme and markings. After a decade with Eastern, the plane became HK-554 with SAM Colombia, and was retired in March 1977. It was then purchased by the Argentine Navy as a spares aircraft for their P-3 Orion fleet and eventually scrapped. **AC**

JUNKERS IN ICELAND

Greetings from Iceland! In our small community of aviation enthusiasts, we enjoy each issue of *Air Classics* and the magazine's reporting on vintage and veteran aircraft. That is why we send in the occasional letter documenting downed Allied and Axis aircraft in our country. As you know, most of Iceland is very remote and we believe that more aircraft will be discovered with the passage of time. As we had noted in previous letters, WWII "tourism" has become somewhat popular and visitors seem to enjoy visiting crash sites that still survive along with the final resting places of downed aircraft. We particularly enjoyed Steve Blake's series on Bell P-39/P-400 Airacobras in the Pacific and that is why we are sending in some shots of a Junkers Ju 88 that was involved with a P-39.

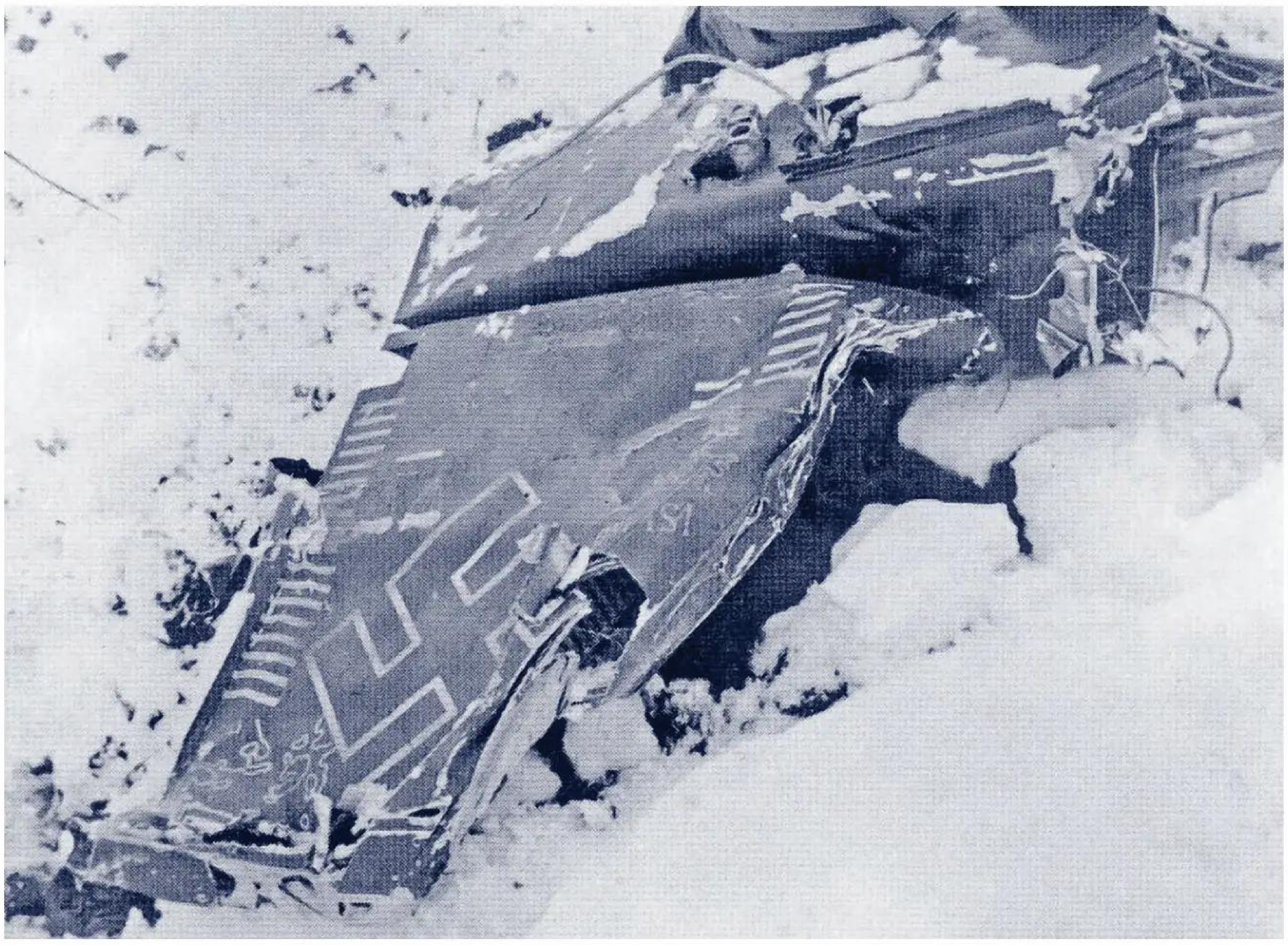


War-time photo of the Ju 88 being removed from the crash site. Note the German insignia and aircraft coding.



USAAF crewman with the wing of the Ju 88 on 8 November 1942.

On 18 October 1942, Lt. J.D. Shaffer was flying a P-39D Airacobra on patrol when he encountered Junkers Ju 88D-5 A6+EH WNr. 1726 assigned to *1.(F)/120* operating out of Norway. The *Luftwaffe* aircraft was on a photo recon mission near Hvalfjordur and Shaffer immediately attacked the aircraft. The German pilot increased speed while the gunners fired back. The Junkers dove towards the waters of the fjord and it appears the pilot was aiming for a dark cloud in which to escape. However, the Airacobra closed distance and rammed (apparently accidently) the tail of the Ju 88 with its propeller.

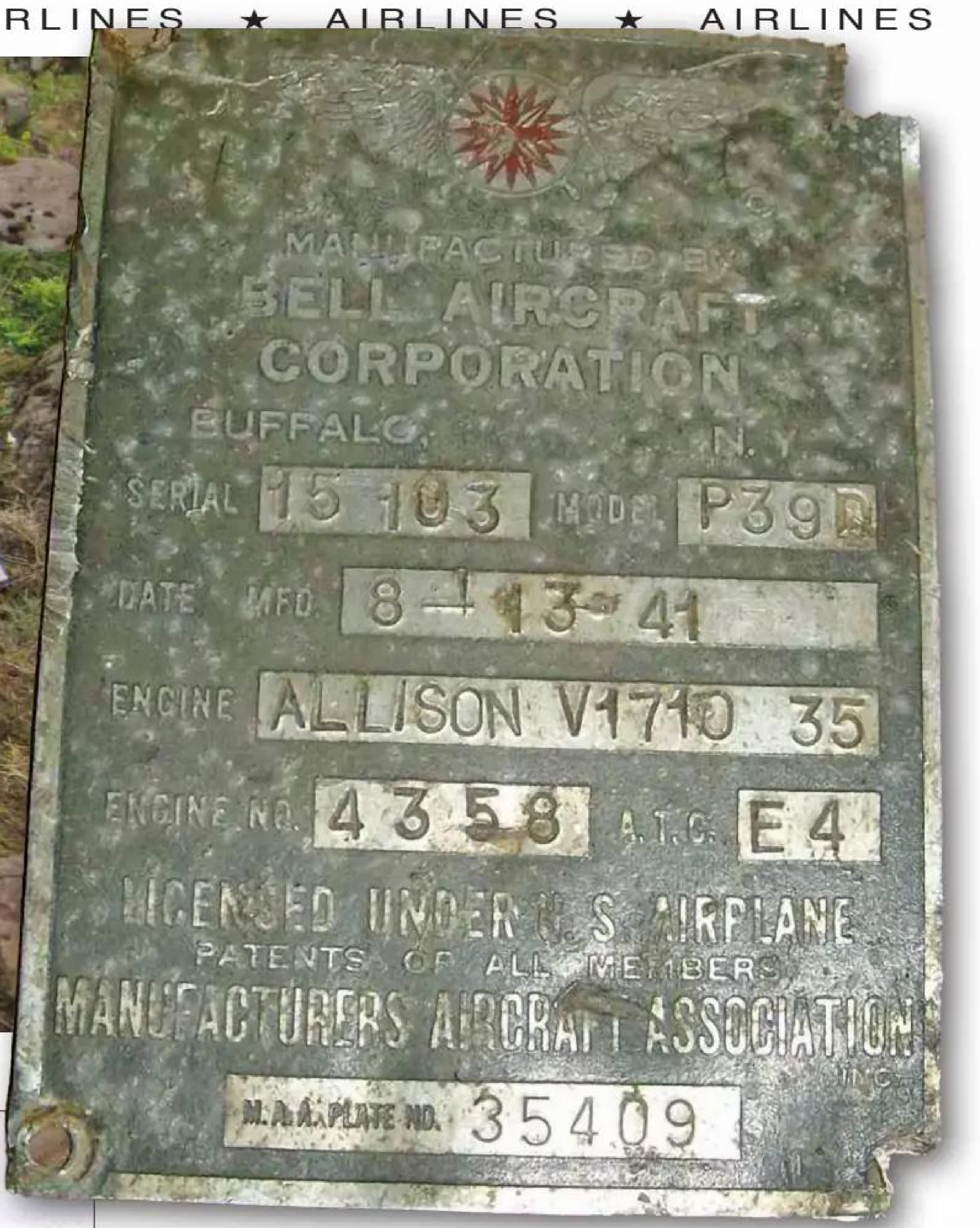


Note what appears to be victory or mission markings on the Ju 88's vertical.

Damaged, the Ju 88 flew on into Svinaskaro and crashed into a narrow ravine at Jokulgil. A search was instigated but the wreck was not found until 15 days later. The crew of three died in the crash and consisted of Lt. Harald Osthus, Lt. Josef Ulsamar, and Fw. Franz Kirchmann.

Some of the Ju 88's wreckage was

Bits and pieces of the Ju 88 still litter the area.



Data plate from the P-39D.

Wreckage of the Airacobra.

salvaged but a considerable amount was left in place and today the wreck is a popular hiking site.

Just a few days before this Airacobra victory, P-39D USAAF 41-6764 disappeared on 6 October 1942 while being flown by Lt. J.E. Hoffman of the 33rd Fighter Squadron. Residents at Kirkuarjarklaustur spotted a very low-flying P-39 during snow showers and believed that the pilot was lost. The aircraft had taken off from Reykjavik at 1255 and was due to return at 1510. An extensive search was launched but proved to be negative.

It was not until 2 June 1944, that sheep farmers were running sheep in the eastern part of Sioumannaafretti when they found a crashed aircraft. The body of the pilot was in the aircraft. One of the farmers notified American forces and a force of 20 soldiers was put together. Guided by locals, they found the crash site in an extremely remote area. Several holes were dug and the aircraft remains were buried. The engine was relatively undamaged so the soldiers took to wrecking it so that it could not be reused. Carrying the pilot's body, they began the return trip but ran into heavy fog and had to be guided by farmers.

Over the years, much of this wreckage has resurfaced and, once again, has become a frequently visited hiking site. I hope these few notes provide a bit of information on the little-known activities of the P-39 in Iceland. I will be reporting on more crash sites in the near future.

Sigurour Hreinsson
Reykjavik, Iceland

EVEREADY TO THE RESCUE

In July's "Eveready to the Rescue," I have some additional information on the two PT-26s Cornells identified in the lead photos. Cornell EW412 was initially in Stored Reserve at Calgary and then the RCAF Record Card notes "No. 24 Service Flying Training School," but this must be an error as there was no No. 24 SFTS. Some of the other cards have been corrected to show the location as No. 24 Elementary Flying Training School, which was at Abbottsford, British Columbia. It appears to have been a replacement for a Cornell lost in an accident. Later, it went into storage at No. 5 Reserve Equipment Maintenance Unit, Picton, Ontario.

Cornell EW422 was initially in Stored Reserve at Calgary and was then assigned to No. 20 Service Flying Training School at Oshawa, Ontario. Then, it went to No. 5 REMU at Picton.

Both cards show on the back that the planes were returned to the US off the Lend-Lease Account on 1 January 1946, but the front of both cards shows that their actual assignment on 19 January 1945 was Miami Air Technical Service in Florida. I checked other cards with close-by serials and they all show this Miami destination for EW414, EW415, EW416, EW419, EW429, and EW421. I have no idea how many went to that location unless I look at hundreds more of the record cards!

Most of the Lend-Lease Cornell cards show that they were returned to the Office of the Foreign Liquidation Commission at Niagara Falls (and other locations), so these entries may indicate something different was happening to this particular group of aircraft.

Note that the old airfield at Picton is like a WWII time warp, with the wartime hangars, barracks, etc. all still intact. As you have printed in "Warbird & Classic Report," the restored Lancaster from the Trenton museum is being temporarily displayed at Picton.

Fleet Aircraft of Canada built 93 PT-23s for the USAAF and 1642 PT-26As and PT-26Bs at their plant at Fort Erie, Ontario. As noted in the article, the Cornells with the "EW" serials were US-built PT-26 Cornell Mk. I aircraft. The USAAC/USAAF ordered 1057 PT-26A and PT-26B Cornell Mk. II and Mk. III Lend-Lease aircraft from Fleet, including RCAF and RAF orders, the total orders were for 2100 aircraft, but this was cut back in 1944 so only 1642 were completed. The numbers are rather confusing and probably need a spreadsheet to explain them!

All this brought back some strange Cornell facts I found during research. It appears that many of the Canadian-built Cornells with RCAF serials (not Lend-Lease serials) were then ferried from Fort Erie, Ontario, to the Fairchild plant at Hagerstown, New York, and thence ferried to training fields across Canada and the USA by Air Corps ferry pilots. Also, and perhaps part of the "politics" of the time, it appears that they took ferry routes that kept them in the USA for as long as possible before they crossed the border back into Canada. Perhaps it was simply to avoid flying them across Canada in winter weather conditions. For example, a number of Montreal-built Stranraer flying boats were also ferried to British Columbia via the Southern Ferry Route in late 1941/early 1942, using various lakes and reservoirs — causing some consternation when those large biplanes appeared without warning in sensitive areas at the time of Pearl Harbor.

For example, in September 1943, a group of 20 Canadian-built RCAF Cornells (RCAF 10766 through RCAF 10785) left Romulus Army Air Field in Michigan on a ferry flight to No. 24 EFTS at Abbotsford, British Columbia. To avoid winter weather in Canada, they took the Southern Ferry Route via Texas, Oklahoma, New Mexico, etc. to Tucson where the USAAF ferry pilots turned them over to a group of WASP pilots who then ferried the planes up the West Coast to Abbotsford where No. 24 EFTS had officially opened on 6 September 1943.

On 11 September 1943 on the El Paso to Tucson leg, Cornell 10767 and 10768 disappeared. The crashed aircraft were later found a few yards apart on Mt. Riley, 40 miles west of El Paso and 30 miles southwest of Las Cruces, New Mexico. Both pilots were killed but no other pilots in the gaggle saw anything. It was presumed the two planes collided. Oddly, there are still quite a few remains of the two planes at the crash sites. RCAF 10767 and 10768 were former Lend-Lease Cornells with RAF serials FZ214 and FZ215 (USAAF 43-36264 and 43-36265) that had been reassigned to the RCAF from Lend-Lease orders.

Jerry Vernon
Burnaby, BC, Canada

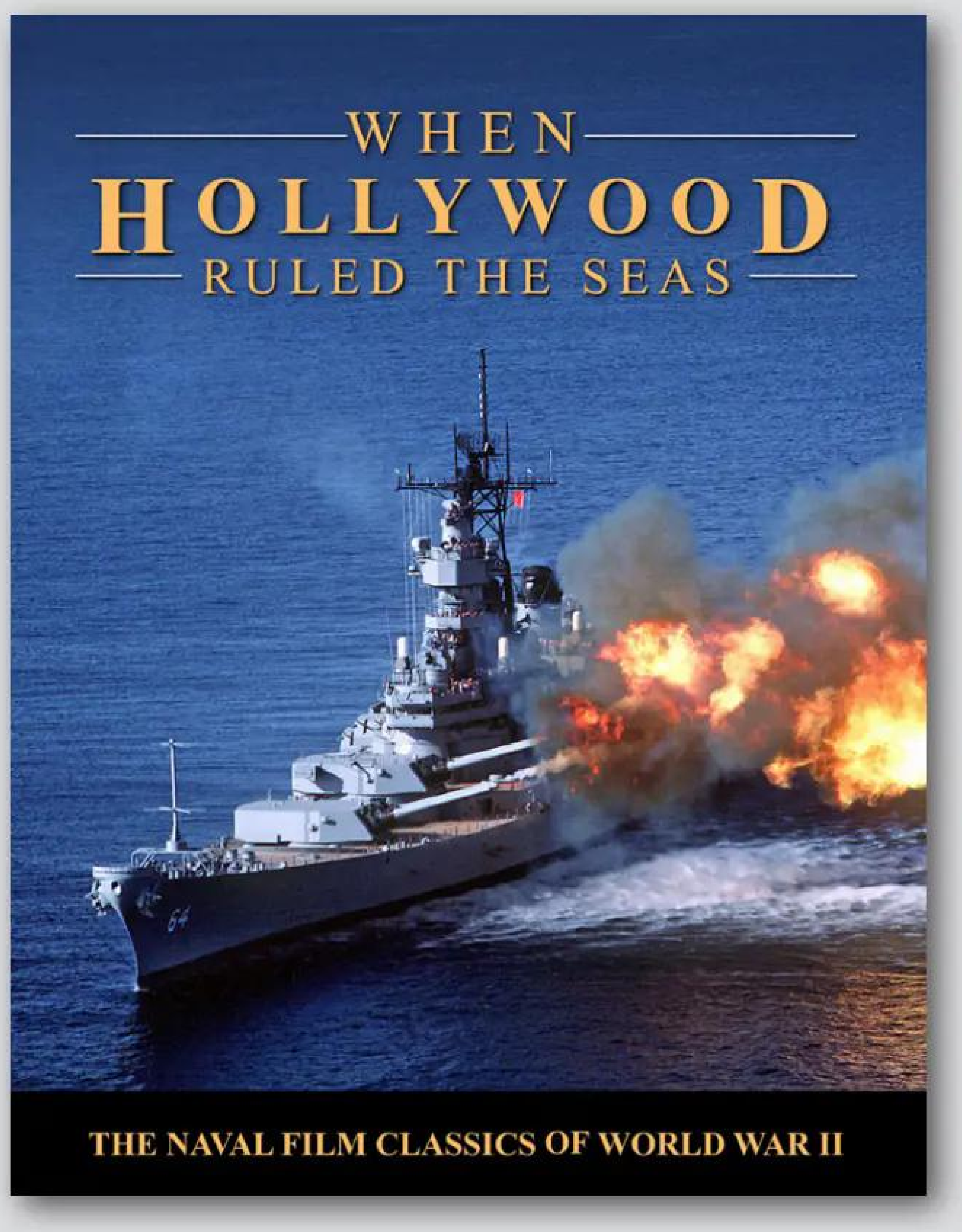
I enjoyed the article "Eveready to the Rescue" in the July issue and I just might have owned one of those PT-26s in the first photo. My aircraft was registered N9878H (43-34433). It was one of my favorites — smooth controls and well-balanced flight characteristics, a true hands-off flying machine. On 6 May 1983, I had the misfortune of losing the Ranger engine when the oil pressure dropped and the Ranger seized. I was on a flight to the Lorain County Airport in Ohio for an annual inspection. I made a forced landing on some very rough terrain but the old PT-26 was a tough bird and came through just fine but I can't say the same about my back! After that, I installed a new Ranger and later donated N9878H to the Commemorative Air Force. I understand that the plane was later completely destroyed in an unfortunate accident.

Owen Stiegelmeier
Venice, FL

JAPANESE MUSEUM AIRCRAFT

I felt very sad and embarrassed after seeing the article on the Kawanishi George in the September edition of "Warbird & Classic Report." If more conservation work is not done with this rare fighter, it will eventually completely coorode away and become scrap. This means that it can't be preserved for future generations. We Japanese have

The George being raised from the seabed after its discovery.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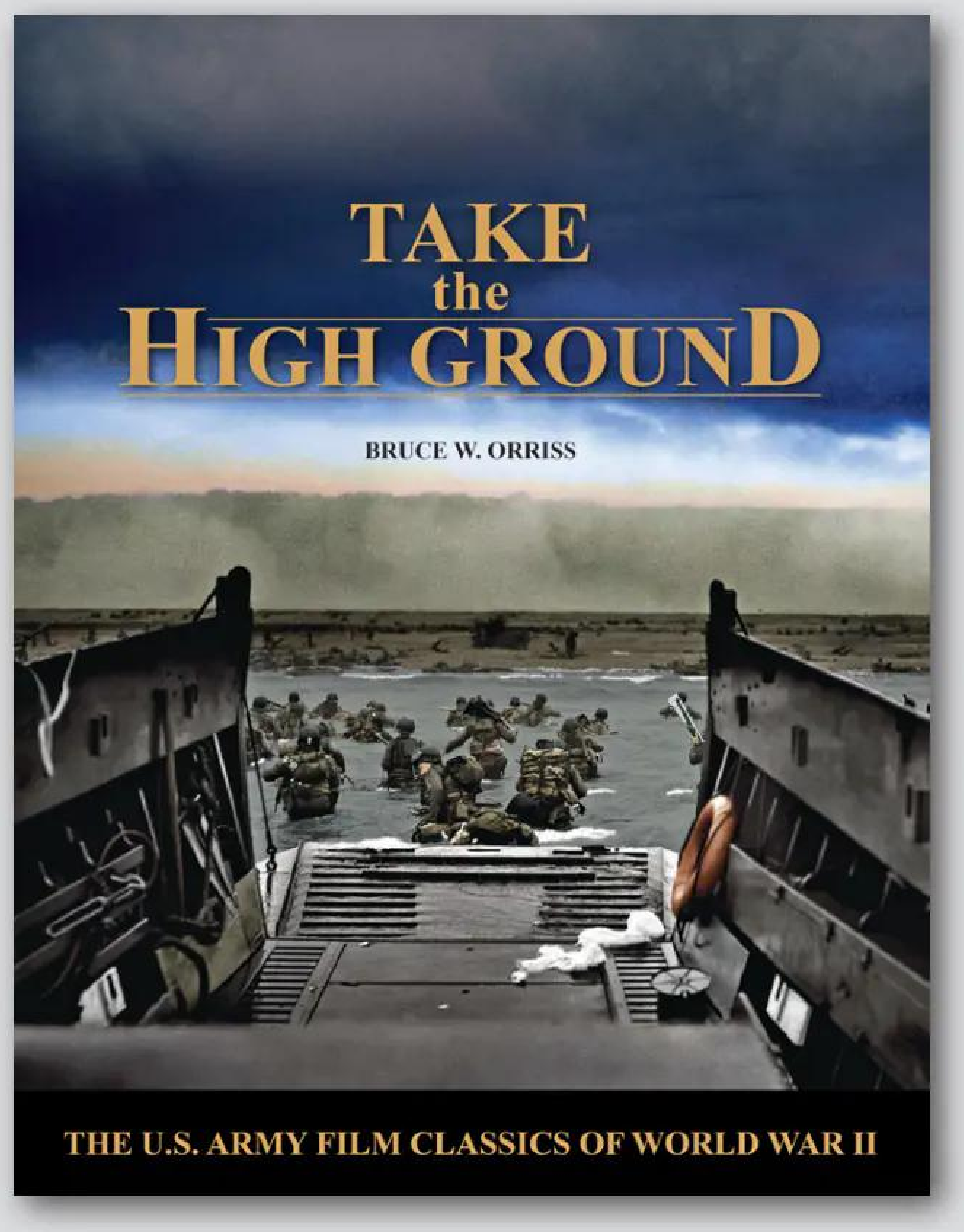
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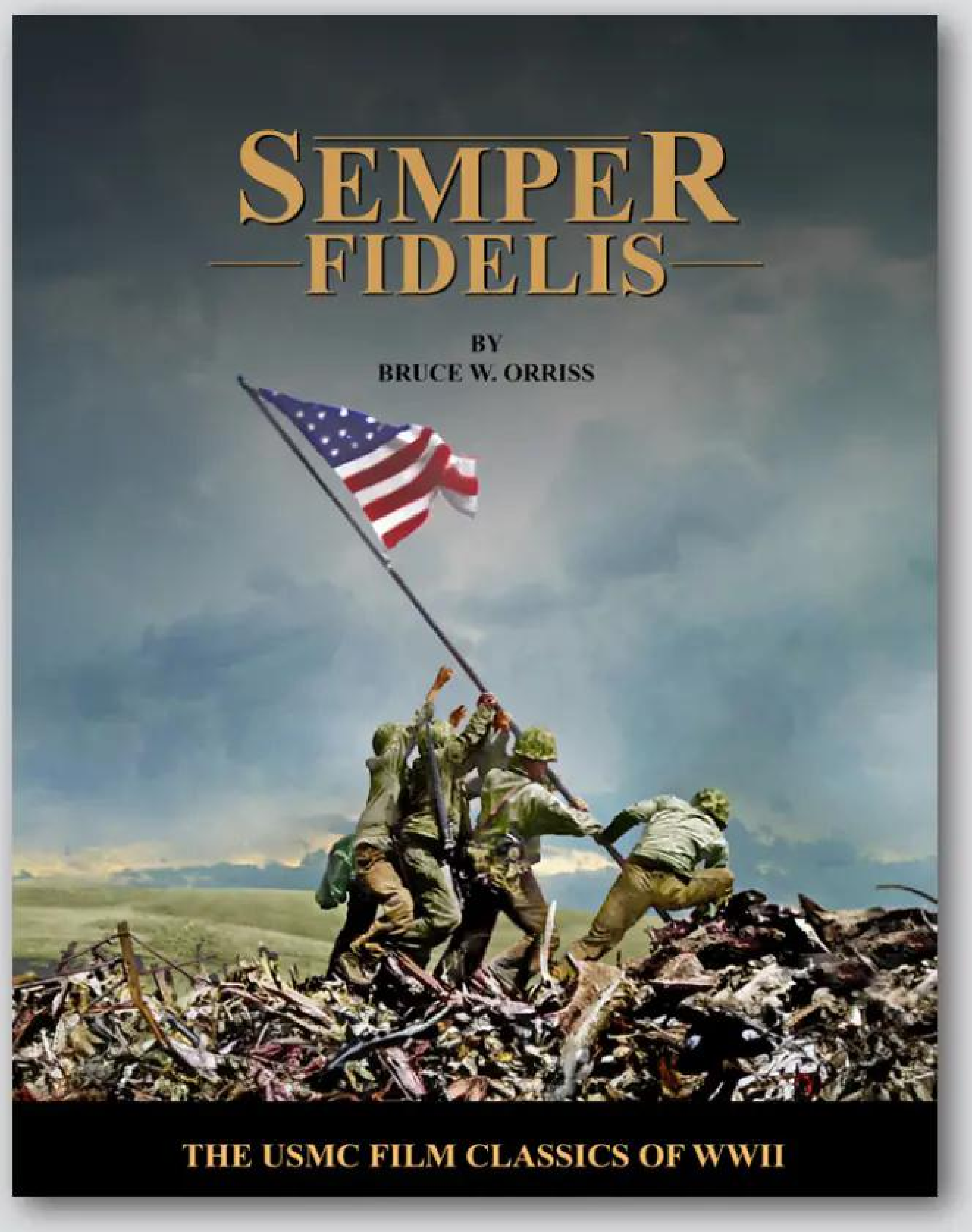
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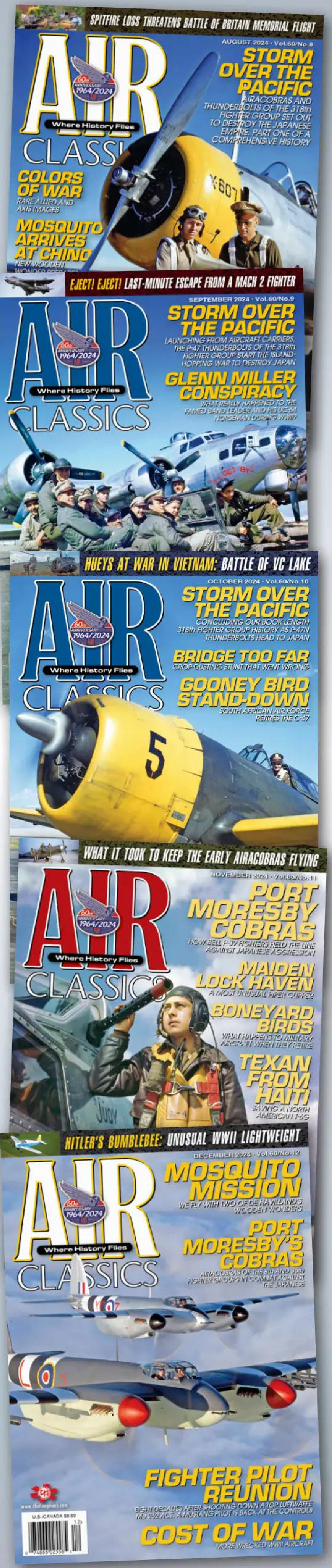
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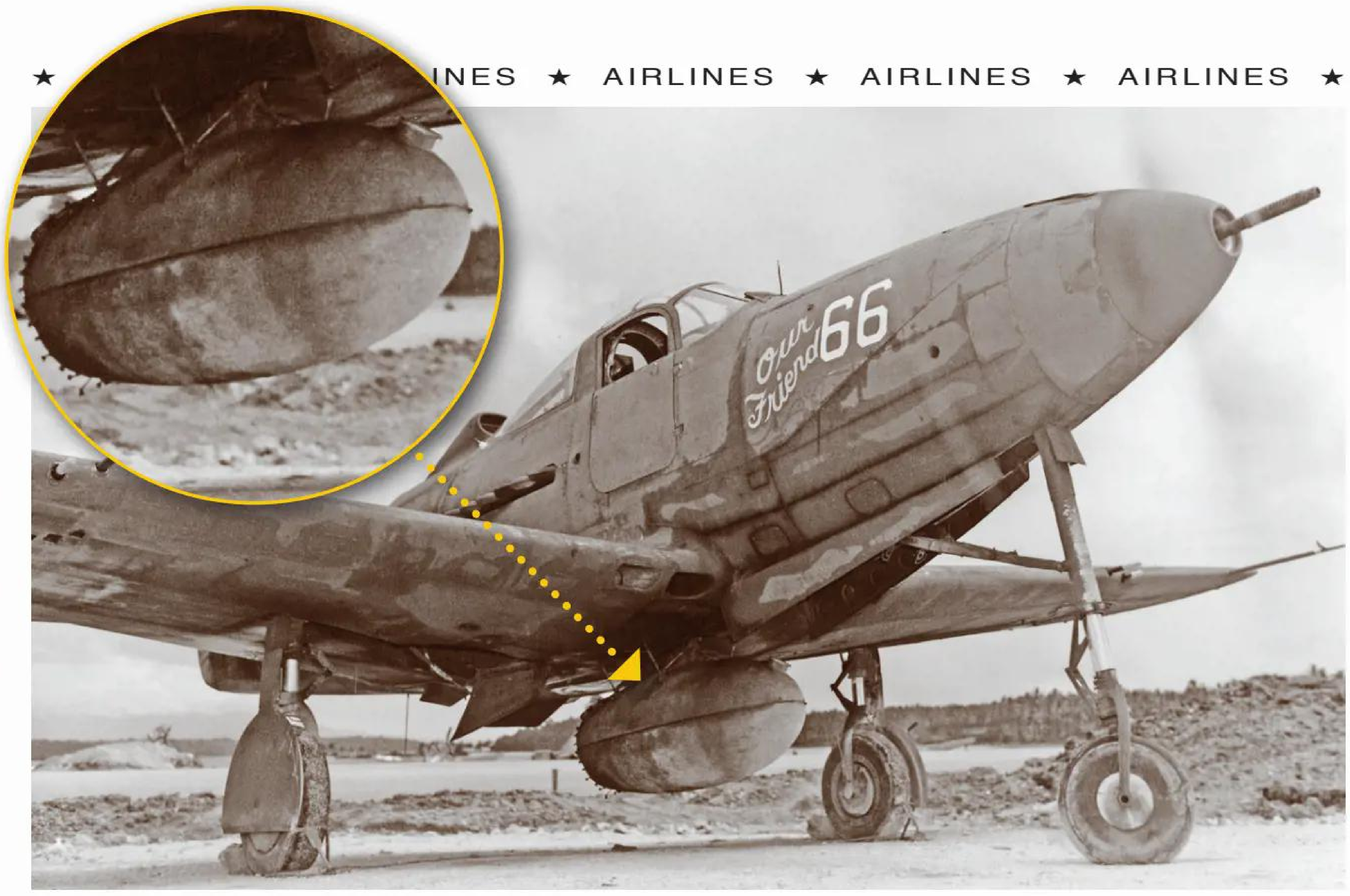
Our Friend 66

Detail view of the drop tank from the last issue. As Mr. Dempsey points out, the rear portion of the tank has been removed and there appears to be a series of wires placed around the opening. There also appears to be an extra cable attached to the tank.

no affection for old airplanes and see them only as relics. This is how Japan handles aircraft 80-years-old and why my country has no full-scale aviation museums. This is a sad revelation of the true state of affairs in my country. I am concerned about the future of the George but also the two-seat Zero, the huge Emily flying boat, the Hayate, and the few other precious WWII aircraft that we have in this country. Unfortunately, this is what Japan is like.

Takamasa Koda
Via email

AIRACOBRAS

Hats off to Steve Blake. I just finished the second part of "Port Moresby's Airacobras" and it was loaded with facts that were new to me. Also, the photo selection was incredible since the poor P-39 never seems to get much coverage and most articles are illustrated with the common, everyday P-39 shots we have seen a thousand times. I would like to thank *Air Classics* for publishing such a long article. I know this is something most magazines would not do. This past year, I have dropped my subscriptions to both *Aviation History* and *Flight Journal*. Both magazines had taken a big, in my opinion, drop in quality with inferior paper, poor stories, and virtually no photos of historic value. It seems that when they are incapable of finding historic photos then they just stick in shots of Warbirds which, of course, are completely unrelated.

What I wanted to bring to the attention of readers is the opening photograph of the Airacobra *Our Friend* on Pages 30/31. Please note the belly tank. At first glance, one would think that this was the standard P-39 drop tank added for extra range. It wasn't. Note that the rear portion of the tank has been removed. *Our Friend* was preparing to takeoff on a search and rescue mission and for that role, belly tanks had been modified to contain a life raft, supplies, and (I believe) a small parachute to retard the speed of the drop. Once the Airacobra pilot had located the down airman, he would orbit the area to determine wind direction and then make a slow run and drop the tank. The parachute would deploy and then pull out the life raft (again, this is my speculation on how the system worked). Along with my other aviation activities, I am also a modeler that enjoys building aircraft with unusual modifications. I am going to do a large-scale model of *Our Friend* since I find the weathering and the fact that plane is absolutely filthy to be great challenges to the modeler. For complete accuracy, I need to get more details of the SAR tank and am appealing to readers that might have more photos or, even better, manual drawings. Thanks for a great publication.

Roy Dempsey
Lincoln, NE

AC

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